ifornia
onal
ty

THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES

THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES

DISQUISITIONS

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

by Soame Jenyns

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY,

IN PALL-MALL.

M.DCC.LXXXII.

AC
7
J45d

CONTENTS.

DISQUISITION I.

ON the Chain of Universal Being Page 1

DISQUISITION II.

On Cruelty to Inferior Animals - 12

DISQUISITION III.

On a Præ-existent State - - 27

DISQUISITION IV.

On the Nature of Time - 47

DISQUISITION V.

On the Analogy between Things Material and Intellectual - Page 84

DISQUISITION VI.

On Rational Christianity - 101

DISQUISITION VII.

On Government and Civil Liberty 119

DISQUISITION VIII.

On Religious Eſtabliſhments - 152

DISQUI-

DISQUISITIONS, &c.

DISQUISITION I.

ON THE CHAIN OF UNIVERSAL BEING.

THE farther we inquire into the works of our great Creator, the more evident marks we ſhall diſcover of his infinite wiſdom and power, and perhaps in none more remarkable, than in that wonderful chain of Beings,

with which this terreſtrial globe is furniſhed; riſing above each other, from the ſenſeleſs clod, to the brighteſt genius of human kind, in which, tho' the chain itſelf is ſufficiently viſible, the links, which compoſe it, are ſo minute, and ſo finely wrought, that they are quite imperceptible to our eyes. The various qualities, with which theſe various Beings are endued, we perceive without difficulty, but the boundaries of thoſe qualities, which form this chain of ſubordination, are ſo mixed, that where one ends, and the next begins, we are unable to diſcover. The manner by which this is performed, is a ſubject well worthy of our conſideration, tho'

I do

I do not remember to have ſeen it much conſidered; but on an accurate examination appears to be this.

In order to diffuſe all poſſible happineſs, God has been pleaſed to fill this earth with innumerable orders of Beings, ſuperior to each other in proportion to the qualities, and faculties which he has thought proper to beſtow upon them: to mere matter he has given extenſion, ſolidity, and gravity; to plants, vegetation; to animals, life and inſtinct; and to man, reaſon; each of which ſuperior qualities augments the excellence, and dignity of the poſſeſſor, and places him higher in the ſcale of univerſal exiſtence. In all theſe, it is remarkable, that

he has not formed this neceſſary, and beautiful ſubordination, by placing Beings of quite different natures above each other, but by granting ſome additional quality to each ſuperior order, in conjunction with all thoſe poſſeſſed by their inferiors; ſo that, tho' they riſe above each other in excellence, by means of theſe additional qualities, one mode of exiſtence is common to them all, without which they never could have coaleſced in one uniform and regular ſyſtem.

Thus, for inſtance, in plants we find all the qualities of mere matter, the only order below them, ſolidity, extenſion, and gravity, with the addition of vegetation; in animals, all the properties of matter,

together with the vegetation of plants, to which is added, life, and inſtinct; and in man we find all the properties of matter, the vegetation of plants, the life and inſtinct of animals, to all which is ſuper-added reaſon.

That man is endued with theſe properties of all inferior orders, will plainly appear by a ſlight examination of his compoſition; his body is material, and has all the properties of mere matter, ſolidity, extenſion, and gravity; it is alſo veſted with the quality of plants, that is, a power of vegetation, which it inceſſantly exerciſes without any knowledge, or conſent of his: it is ſown, grows up, expands, comes to maturity, withers and dies, like

all other vegetables: he poſſeſſes likewiſe the qualities of lower animals, and ſhares their fate; like them, he is called into life without his knowledge or conſent; like them, he is compelled by irreſiſtible inſtincts, to anſwer the purpoſes for which he was deſigned; like them, he performs his deſtined courſe, partakes of it's bleſſings, and endures it's ſufferings for a ſhort time, then dies, and is ſeen no more: in him inſtinct is not leſs powerful, than in them, tho' leſs viſible, by being confounded with reaſon, which it ſometimes concurs with, and ſometimes counteracts; by this, with the concurrence of reaſon, he is taught the belief of a God, of a future ſtate, and the difference

difference between moral good, and evil; to purſue happineſs, to avoid danger, and to take care of himſelf, and his offspring; by this too he is frequently impelled, in contradiction to reaſon, to relinquiſh eaſe, and ſafety, to traverſe inhoſpitable deſarts and tempeſtuous ſeas, to inflict, and ſuffer all the miſeries of war, and, like the Herring, and the Mackarel, to haſten to his own deſtruction, for the public benefit, which he neither underſtands, or cares for. Thus is this wonderful chain extended from the loweſt to the higheſt order of terreſtrial Beings, by links ſo nicely fitted, that the beginning and end of each is inviſible to the moſt inquiſitive eye, and yet

they all together compoſe one vaſt and beautiful ſyſtem of ſubordination.

The manner by which the conſummate wiſdom of the divine Artificer has formed this gradation, ſo extenſive in the whole, and ſo imperceptible in the parts, is this: —He conſtantly unites the higheſt degree of the qualities of each inferior order to the loweſt degree of the ſame qualities, belonging to the order next above it; by which means, like the colours of a ſkilful painter, they are ſo blended together, and ſhaded off into each other, that no line of diſtinction is any where to be ſeen. Thus, for inſtance, ſolidity, extenſion, and gravity, the qualities of

mere matter, being united with the loweſt degree of vegetation, compoſe a ſtone; from whence this vegetative power aſcending thro' an infinite variety of herbs, flowers, plants, and trees to its greateſt perfection in the ſenſitive plant, joins there the loweſt degree of animal life in the ſhell-fiſh, which adheres to the rock; and it is difficult to diſtinguiſh which poſſeſſes the greateſt ſhare, as the one ſhews it only by ſhrinking from the finger, and the other by opening to receive the water, which ſurrounds it. In the ſame manner this animal life riſes from this low beginning in the ſhell-fiſh, thro' innumerable ſpecies of inſects, fiſhes, birds, and beaſts to the confines of reaſon, where, in

the

the dog, the monkey, and chimpanzè, it unites ſo cloſely with the loweſt degree of that quality in man, that they cannot eaſily be diſtinguiſhed from each other. From this loweſt degree in the brutal Hottentot, reaſon, with the aſſiſtance of learning and ſcience, advances, thro' the various ſtages of human underſtanding, which riſe above each other, 'till in a Bacon, or a Newton it attains the ſummit.

Here we muſt ſtop, being unable to purſue the progreſs of this aſtoniſhing chain beyond the limits of this terreſtrial globe with the naked eye; but thro' the perſpective of analogy, and conjecture we may perceive that it aſcends a great deal higher, to the inhabitants of

of other planets, to angels, and archangels, the loweſt orders of whom may be united by a like eaſy tranſition with the higheſt of our own, in whom to reaſon may be added intuitive knowledge, inſight into futurity, with innumerable other faculties of which we are unable to form the leaſt idea; thro' whom it may aſcend, by gradations almoſt infinite, to thoſe moſt exalted of created Beings, who are ſeated on the footſtool of the celeſtial throne.

DIS-

DISQUISITION II.

ON CRUELTY TO INFERIOR ANIMALS.

MAN is that link of the chain of univerſal exiſtence, by which ſpiritual and corporeal Beings are united: as the numbers and variety of the latter his inferiors are almoſt infinite, ſo probably are thoſe of the former his ſuperiors; and as we ſee that the lives and happineſs of thoſe below us are dependent on our wills, we may reaſonably conclude, that our lives, and happineſs are equally dependent on the wills of thoſe

thoſe above us; accountable, like ourſelves, for the uſe of this power, to the Supreme Creator, and Governor of all things. Should this analogy be well founded, how criminal will our account appear, when laid before that juſt and impartial Judge! How will man, that ſanguinary tyrant, be able to excuſe himſelf from the charge of thoſe innumerable cruelties inflicted on his unoffending ſubjects committed to his care, formed for his benefit, and placed under his authority by their common Father? whoſe mercy is over all his works, and who expects that this authority ſhould be exerciſed not only with tenderneſs and mercy, but in conformity to the laws of juſtice and gratitude.

But

But to what horrid deviations from theſe benevolent intentions are we daily witneſſes! No ſmall part of mankind derive their chief amuſements from the deaths and ſufferings of inferior animals; a much greater, conſider them only as engines of wood, or iron, uſeful in their ſeveral occupations. The carman drives his horſe, and the carpenter his nail, by repeated blows; and ſo long as theſe produce the deſired effect, and they both go, they neither reflect or care whether either of them have any ſenſe of feeling. The butcher knocks down the ſtately ox with no more compaſſion than the blackſmith hammers a horſe-ſhoe; and plunges his knife into the throat of the innocent lamb,

with as little reluctance as the taylor ſticks his needle into the collar of a coat.

If there are ſome few, who, formed in a ſofter mould, view with pity the ſufferings of theſe defenceleſs creatures, there is ſcarce one who entertains the leaſt idea, that juſtice or gratitude can be due to their merits, or their ſervices. The ſocial and friendly dog is hanged without remorſe, if, by barking in defence of his maſter's perſon, and property, he happens unknowingly to diſturb his reſt: the generous horſe, who has carried his ungrateful maſter for many years with eaſe, and ſafety, worn out with age and infirmities contracted in his ſervice, is by him condemned to end his miſerable

miſerable days in a duſt-cart, where the more he exerts his little remains of ſpirit, the more he is whipped, to ſave his ſtupid driver the trouble of whipping ſome other, leſs obedient to the laſh. Sometimes, having been taught the practice of many unnatural and uſeleſs feats in a riding-houſe, he is at laſt turned out, and conſigned to the dominion of a hackney-coachman, by whom he is every day corrected for performing thoſe tricks, which he has learned under ſo long and ſevere a diſcipline. The ſluggiſh bear, in contradiction to his nature, is taught to dance, for the diverſion of a malignant mob, by placing red-hot irons under his feet: and the majeſtic bull is tortured by every mode,

which malice can invent, for no offence, but that he is gentle, and unwilling to aſſail his diabolical tormentors. Theſe, with innumerable other acts of cruelty, injuſtice, and ingratitude, are every day committed, not only with impunity, but without cenſure, and even without obſervation; but we may be aſſured, that they cannot finally paſs away unnoticed, and unretaliated.

The laws of ſelf-defence undoubtedly juſtify us in deſtroying thoſe animals who would deſtroy us, who injure our properties, or annoy our perſons; but not even theſe, whenever their ſituation incapacitates them from hurting us. I know of no right which we have to

ſhoot a bear on an inacceſſible iſland of ice, or an eagle on the mountain's top; whoſe lives cannot injure us, nor deaths procure us any benefit. We are unable to give life, and therefore ought not wantonly to take it away from the meaneſt inſect, without ſufficient reaſon; they all receive it from the ſame benevolent hand as ourſelves, and have therefore an equal right to enjoy it.

God has been pleaſed to create numberleſs animals intended for our ſuſtenance; and that they are ſo intended, the agreeable flavour of their fleſh to our palates, and the wholeſome nutriment which it adminiſters to our ſtomachs, are ſufficient proofs: theſe, as they are

formed

formed for our uſe, propagated by our culture, and fed by our care, we have certainly a right to deprive of life, becauſe it is given and preſerved to them on that condition; but this ſhould always be performed with all the tenderneſs and compaſſion which ſo diſagreeable an office will permit; and no circumſtances ought to be omitted, which can render their executions as quick and eaſy as poſſible. For this, Providence has wiſely and benevolently provided, by forming them in ſuch a manner, that their fleſh becomes rancid and unpalatable by a painful and lingering death; and has thus compelled us to be merciful without compaſſion, and cautious of their ſuffering, for

the ſake of ourſelves: but, if there are any whoſe taſtes are ſo vitiated, and whoſe hearts are ſo hardened, as to delight in ſuch inhuman ſacrifices, and to partake of them without remorſe, they ſhould be looked upon as dæmons in human ſhapes, and expect a retaliation of thoſe tortures which they have inflicted on the innocent, for the gratification of their own depraved and unnatural appetites.

So violent are the paſſions of anger and revenge in the human breaſt, that it is not wonderful that men ſhould perſecute their real or imaginary enemies with cruelty and malevolence; but that there ſhould exiſt in nature a Being who can receive pleaſure from giving pain,

would

would be totally incredible, if we were not convinced, by melancholy experience, that there are not only many, but that this unaccountable diſpoſition is in ſome manner inherent in the nature of man; for, as he cannot be taught by example, nor led to it by temptation, or prompted to it by intereſt, it muſt be derived from his native conſtitution; and is a remarkable confirmation of what revelation ſo frequently inculcates — that he brings into the world with him an original depravity, the effects of a fallen and degenerate ſtate; in proof of which we need only obſerve, that the nearer he approaches to a ſtate of nature, the more predominant this diſpoſition appears, and the

more violently it operates. We ſee children laughing at the miſeries which they inflict on every unfortunate animal which comes within their power: all ſavages are ingenious in contriving, and happy in executing, the moſt exquiſite tortures; and the common people of all countries are delighted with nothing ſo much as bull-baitings, prize-fightings, executions, and all ſpectacles of cruelty and horror. Though civilization may in ſome degree abate this native ferocity, it can never quite extirpate it; the moſt poliſhed are not aſhamed to be pleaſed with ſcenes of little leſs barbarity, and, to the diſgrace of human nature, to dignify them with the name of ſports. They

arm

arm cocks with artificial weapons, which nature had kindly denied to their malevolence, and with ſhouts of applauſe and triumph, ſee them plunge them into each other's hearts: they view with delight the trembling deer and defenceleſs hare, flying for hours in the utmoſt agonies of terror and deſpair, and at laſt, ſinking under fatigue, devoured by their mercileſs purſuers: they ſee with joy the beautiful pheaſant and harmleſs partridge drop from their flight, weltering in their blood, or perhaps periſhing with wounds and hunger, under the cover of ſome friendly thicket to which they have in vain retreated for ſafety: they triumph over the unſuſpecting fiſh, whom

they have decoyed by an inſidious pretence of feeding, and drag him from his native element by a hook fixed to and tearing out his entrails: and, to add to all this, they ſpare neither labour nor expence to preſerve and propagate theſe innocent animals, for no other end, but to multiply the objects of their perſecution.

What name ſhould we beſtow on a ſuperior Being, whoſe whole endeavours were employed, and whoſe whole pleaſure conſiſted in terrifying, enſnaring, tormenting, and deſtroying mankind? whoſe ſuperior faculties were exerted in fomenting animoſities amongſt them, in contriving engines of deſtruction, and inciting them to uſe them in maiming

ing and murdering each other? whoſe power over them was employed in aſſiſting the rapacious, deceiving the ſimple, and oppreſſing the innocent? who, without provocation or advantage, ſhould continue from day to day, void of all pity and remorſe, thus to torment mankind for diverſion, and at the ſame time endeavour with their utmoſt care to preſerve their lives, and to propagate their ſpecies, in order to increaſe the number of victims devoted to his malevolence, and be delighted in proportion to the miſeries which he occaſioned? I ſay, what name deteſtable enough could we find for ſuch a Being? Yet, if we impartially conſider the caſe, and our intermediate

termediate ſituation, we muſt acknowledge, that, with regard to inferior animals, juſt ſuch a Being is a ſportſman.

DISQUI-

DISQUISITION III.

ON A PRÆ-EXISTENT STATE.

THAT mankind had exiſted in ſome ſtate previous to the preſent, was the opinion of the wiſeſt ſages of the moſt remote antiquity. It was held by the Gymnoſophiſts of Egypt, the Brachmans of India, the Magi of Perſia, and the greateſt philoſophers of Greece and Rome; it was likewiſe adopted by the fathers of the Chriſtian church, and frequently enforced by her primitive writers; why it has been ſo little noticed, ſo much overlooked, rather than rejected, by

by the divines and metaphyſicians of latter ages, I am at a loſs to account for, as it is undoubtedly confirmed by reaſon, by all the appearances of nature, and the doctrines of revelation.

In the firſt place then it is confirmed by reaſon; which teaches us, that it is impoſſible that the conjunction of a male and female can create, or bring into Being an immortal ſoul: they may prepare a material habitation for it; but there muſt be an immaterial præexiſtent inhabitant ready to take poſſeſſion. Reaſon aſſures us, that an immortal ſoul, which will exiſt eternally after the diſſolution of the body, muſt have eternally exiſted before the formation of it; for whatever

whatever has no end, can never have had any beginning, but muſt exiſt in ſome manner which bears no relation to time, to us totally incomprehenſible: if therefore the ſoul will continue to exiſt in a future life, it muſt have exiſted in a former. Reaſon likewiſe tells us, that an omnipotent and benevolent Creator would never have formed ſuch a world as this, and filled it with ſuch inhabitants, if the preſent was the only, or even the firſt ſtate of their exiſtence, a ſtate which, if unconnected with the paſt and the future, ſeems calculated for no one purpoſe intelligible to our underſtandings; neither of good or evil, of happineſs or miſery, of virtue or vice,

of reward or puniſhment, but a confuſed jumble of them all together, proceeding from no viſible cauſe, and tending to no end. But, as we are certain that infinite power cannot be employed without effect, nor infinite wiſdom without deſign, we may rationally conclude, that this world could be deſigned for nothing more than a priſon, in which we are awhile confined to receive puniſhment for the offences committed in a former, and an opportunity of preparing ourſelves for the enjoyment of happineſs in a future life.

Secondly. Theſe concluſions of reaſon are ſufficiently confirmed by the face of nature, and the appearances of things; this world is evi-

dently

dently formed for a place of puniſh-
ment, as well as probation; a priſon,
or houſe of correction, to which we
are committed, ſome for a longer,
and ſome for a ſhorter period; ſome
to the ſevereſt labour, others to
more indulgent taſks: and if we con-
ſider it under this character, we ſhall
perceive it admirably fitted for the
end for which it was intended. It
is a ſpacious, beautiful, and durable
ſtructure: it contains many vari-
ous apartments, a few very com-
fortable, many tolerable, and ſome
extremely wretched: it is incloſed
with a fence ſo impaſſable, that
none can ſurmount it but with the
loſs of life. It's inhabitants likewiſe
exactly reſemble thoſe of other pri-
ſons: they come in with malignant

diſpoſitions, and unruly paſſions, from whence, like other confined criminals, they receive great part of puniſhment by abuſing and injuring each other. As we may ſuppoſe, that they have not all been equally guilty, ſo they are not all equally miſerable; the majority are permitted to procure a tolerable ſubſiſtence by their labour, and paſs thro' their confinement without any extraordinary penalties, except from paying their fees, at their diſcharge by death. Others, who perhaps ſtand in need of more ſevere chaſtiſement, receive it by a variety of methods; ſome by the moſt acute, and ſome by the moſt tedious pains and diſeaſes; ſome by diſappointments, and many by ſucceſs, in their favourite purſuits;

ſuits; ſome by being condemned to ſituations peculiarly unfortunate, as to thoſe of extreme poverty, or ſuperabundant riches, of deſpicable meanneſs, or painful pre-eminence, of galley-ſlaves in a deſpotic, or miniſters in a free country. If we ſurvey the various regions of the globe, what dreadful ſcenes of wretchedneſs every where preſent themſelves to our eyes! in ſome, we ſee thouſands chained to the oar, and perpetually ſuffering from the inclemency of all weathers, and their more inclement maſters: in ſome, not fewer condemned to wear out their miſerable lives in dreary mines, deprived of air and day-light; and in others, much greater numbers torn from their native country, their families, and friends,

and ſold to the moſt inhuman of all tyrants, under whoſe laſh they are worn out with fatigue, or expire in torments. The hiſtory of mankind is indeed little more than a detail of their miſeries, ſome inflicted by the hand of Providence, and many more by their own wickedneſs, and mutual ill-uſage. As nations, we ſee them ſometimes chaſtiſed by plagues, famines, inundations, and earthquakes; and continually deſtroying each other with fire and ſword; we ſee fleets and armies combating with ſavage fury, and employing againſt each other every inſtrument of torture and death, which malevolence can invent, or ferocity make uſe of: we ſee the dying and the dead huddled together in heaps, and weltering in each

other's blood; and can we be ſpectators of this horrid tragedy, without conſidering the performers as condemned criminals, compelled, like the Gladiators of the ancients, to receive their puniſhment from each other's hands? The Orator, the Poet, and the Hiſtorian may celebrate them, as heroes fighting for the rights and liberties of their reſpective countries; but the Chriſtian Philoſopher can look upon them in no other light, than as condemned ſpirits exiled into human fleſh, and ſent into this world to chaſtiſe each other for paſt offences. As individuals, we ſee men afflicted with innumerable diſeaſes, which proceed not from accident, but are congenial with their original

formations, and evidently the diſpoſitions of Providence, deſigned for the moſt important ends; the ſtone grows in the human bladder, under the ſame direction as in the quarry, and the ſeeds of ſcurvy, rheumatiſm, and gout are ſown in the blood by the ſame omnipotent hand, which has ſcattered thoſe of vegetables over the face of the earth. From theſe various inſtruments of torture, numberleſs are the miſeries which mankind endure; nor are thoſe perhaps leſs numerous, tho' leſs viſible, which they ſuffer from that treachery, injuſtice, ingratitude, ill-humour, and perverſeneſs, with which they every hour torment one another, interrupt the peace of ſociety, and imbitter

the

the comforts of domeſtic life; to all which we may add, that wonderful ingenuity, which they poſſeſs, of creating imaginary, in the abſence of real misfortunes, and that corroſive quality in the human mind, which, for want of the proper food of buſineſs or contemplation, preys upon itſelf, and makes ſolitude intolerable, and thinking a moſt painful taſk. Who, that ſurveys this melancholy picture of the preſent life, can entertain a doubt, but that it is intended for a ſtate of puniſhment, and therefore muſt be ſubſequent to ſome former, in which this puniſhment was deſerved.

Laſtly. The opinion of præ-exiſtence is no leſs confirmed by revelation, than by reaſon, and the

appearances of things; for, altho' perhaps it is no where in the New Teſtament explicitly enforced, yet throughout the whole tenour of thoſe writings it is every where implied: in them mankind are conſtantly repreſented as coming into the world under a load of guilt; as condemned criminals, the children of wrath, and objects of divine indignation; placed in it for a time by the mercies of God, to give them an opportunity of expiating this guilt by ſufferings, and regaining, by a pious and virtuous conduct, their loſt ſtate of happineſs and innocence: this is ſtiled working out their ſalvation, not preventing their condemnation, for that is already paſt, and their only hope

hope now is redemption, that is, being reſcued from a ſtate of captivity and ſin, in which they are univerſally involved. This is the very eſſence of the Chriſtian diſpenſation, and the grand principle in which it differs from the religion of nature; in every other reſpect they are nearly ſimilar; they both enjoin the ſame moral duties, and prohibit the ſame vices; both inculcate the belief of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments: but here they eſſentially diſagree; natural religion informs us, that a juſt and benevolent Creator could have no other deſign in placing us in this world, but to make us happy, and that, if we commit no extraordinary crimes, we may hope

to be ſo in another; but Chriſtianity teaches a ſeverer, and more alarming leſſon, and acquaints us, that we are admitted into this life oppreſſed with guilt and depravity, which we muſt atone for by ſuffering its uſual calamities, and work off by acts of poſitive virtue, before we can hope for happineſs in another. Now, if by all this a præ-exiſtent ſtate is not conſtantly ſuppoſed, that is, that mankind have exiſted in ſome ſtate previous to the preſent, in which this guilt was incurred, and this depravity contracted, there can be no meaning at all, or ſuch a meaning as contradicts every principle of common ſenſe—that guilt can be contracted without acting, or that we can act

without exiſting: ſo undeniable is this inference, that it renders any poſitive aſſertion of a præ-exiſtent ſtate totally uſeleſs; as, if a man at the moment of his entrance into a new country was declared a criminal, it would ſurely be unneceſſary to aſſert, that he had lived in ſome other before he came there.

In all our reſearches into abſtruſe ſubjects, there is a certain clue, without which, the further we proceed the more we are bewildered, but which being fortunately diſcovered, leads us at once through the whole labyrinth, puts an end to our difficulties, and opens a ſyſtem perfectly clear, conſiſtent, and intelligible. The doctrine of præ-exiſtence, or the acknowledg-

ment

ment of ſome paſt ſtate of guilt and diſobedience, I take to be this very clue; which if we conſtantly carry along with us, we ſhall proceed unembarraſſed through all the intricate myſteries both of nature and revelation, and at laſt arrive at ſo clear a proſpect of the wiſe and juſt diſpenſations of our Creator, as cannot fail to afford compleat ſatisfaction to the moſt inquiſitive ſceptic.

For inſtance; Are we unable to anſwer that important queſtion, Whence came evil? that is, why a Creator of infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, ſhould have formed a world replete with ſo many imperfections, and thoſe ſo productive of calamities to its inhabitants?

this clue will direct us to this ſatisfactory reply, as far as the queſtion relates to the evils of the preſent life—becauſe he deſigned it for a place of puniſhment and probation; for which it is perfectly adapted; and we can be no more furpriſed to ſee ſuch a world as this make a part of the univerſal ſyſtem, than to ſee a magnificent priſon, with all its appendages of puniſhment, whips, pillories, and gibbets, make a part of a large, populous, and well-governed city. Are we under difficulties to comprehend why the ſame omnipotent and benevolent Creator ſhould fill this world with inhabitants ſo wicked, and ſo miſerable? this clue will immediately lead us to a ſolution of them,

them, and point out the true reaſon—becauſe they are ſent hither to be puniſhed, and reformed. Do we reject all thoſe paſſages in the New Teſtament, as derogatory to the divine wiſdom and goodneſs, which declare, that mankind come into this world under a load of guilt and depravity, and under the diſpleaſure of their Creator?—no ſooner are we brought by this clue within ſight of a præ-exiſtent ſtate, in which this guilt and depravity may have been contracted, but our incredulity vaniſhes, and we perceive plainly, that their admiſſion into this world, under thoſe circumſtances, is not only conſiſtent with the juſtice of God, but the ſtrongeſt inſtance of his mercy and benevolence;

benevolence; as by it they are enabled to purge off this depravity, to expiate their offences, and to reinſtate themſelves in his favour.

Thus is a præ-exiſtent ſtate, I think, clearly demonſtrated, by the principles of reaſon, the appearances of things, and the ſenſe of revelation; all which agree, that this world is intended for a place of puniſhment, as well as probation, and muſt therefore refer to ſome former period; for, as probation implies a future life, for which it is preparatory, ſo puniſhment muſt imply a former ſtate, in which offences were committed, for which it is due; and indeed there is not a ſingle argument drawn from the juſtice of God, and the

ſeemingly

ſeemingly undeſerved ſufferings of many in the preſent ſtate, which can be urged in proof of a future life, which proves not with ſuperior force the exiſtence of another, which is already paſt.

DISQUI-

DISQUISITION IV.

ON THE NATURE OF TIME.

WE are ſo accuſtomed to connect our ideas of time with the hiſtory of what paſſes in it, that is, to miſtake a ſucceſſion of thoughts and actions for time, that we find it extremely difficult, perhaps impoſſible, totally to ſeparate or diſtinguiſh them from each other: and indeed, had we power to effect this in our minds, all human language is ſo formed, that it would fail us in our expreſſion: yet certain

tain it is, that time, abſtracted from the thoughts, actions, and motions which paſs in it, is actually nothing: it is only the mode in which ſome created Beings are ordained to exiſt, but in itſelf has really no exiſtence at all.

Though this opinion may ſeem chimerical to many, who have not much conſidered the ſubject, yet it is by no means new, for it was long ſince adopted by ſome of the moſt celebrated philoſophers of antiquity, particularly by the Epicureans; and is thus well expreſſed by Lucretius:

Tempus item per ſe non eſt; ſed rebus ab ipſis
Conſequitur ſenſus, tranſactum quod ſit in ævo,
Tum quæ res inſtat, quid porro deinde ſequatur;
Nec per ſe, quemquam tempus ſentire, fatendum eſt,
Semotum ab uſum, motu, placidaque quiete.

Time

Time of itſelf is nothing; but from thought
Receives its riſe, by lab'ring fancy wrought,
From things conſidered: while we think on ſome
As preſent, ſome as paſt, and ſome to come:
No thought can think on Time, that's ſtill confeſs'd,
But thinks on things in motion, or at reſt.

CREECH.

From obſerving the diurnal revolutions of the ſun, and the various tranſactions which paſs during thoſe revolutions, we acquire conceptions of days; by dividing theſe days we form hours, minutes, and ſeconds; and by multiplying them, months, years, and ages; then by meaſuring theſe imaginary periods againſt each other, and beſtowing on each diſtinct denominations, we give them the appearance of ſomething real: yeſterday, which is paſt,

and to-morrow, which is not yet come, aſſume the ſame reality as the preſent day; and thus we imagine time to reſemble a great book, one of whoſe pages is every day wrote on, and the reſt remain blank, to be filled up in their turns with the events of futurity; whilſt in fact this is all but the deluſion of our own imaginations, and time is nothing more, than the manner in which paſt, preſent, and future events ſucceed each other: yet is this deluſion ſo correſpondent with our preſent ſtate, and ſo woven up with all human language, that without much reflection it cannot be perceived, nor when perceived can it be remedied: nor can I, while endeavouring to prove time to be

nothing,

nothing, avoid treating it as ſomething in almoſt every line.

There ſeems to be in the nature of things, two modes of exiſtence; one, in which all events, paſt, preſent, and to come, appear in one view; which, if the expreſſion may be allowed, I ſhall call perpetually inſtantaneous; and which, as I apprehend, conſtitutes Eternity; the other, in which all things are preſented ſeparately, and ſucceſſively, which produces what we call Time.

Of the firſt of theſe human reaſon can afford us no manner of conception; yet it aſſures us, on the ſtrongeſt evidence, that ſuch muſt be the exiſtence of the ſupreme Creator of all things, that ſuch probably may be the exiſtence

of many ſuperior orders of created Beings, and that ſuch poſſibly may be our own in another ſtate: to Beings ſo conſtituted, all events paſt, preſent, and future are preſented in one congregated maſs, which to us are ſpread out in ſucceſſion to adapt them to our temporary mode of perception: in theſe ideas have no ſucceſſion, and therefore to their thoughts, actions, or exiſtence, time, which is ſucceſſion only, can bear not the leaſt relation whatſoever. To exiſtence of this kind alone can eternity belong; for eternity can never be compoſed of finite parts, which, however multiplied, can never become infinite; but muſt be ſomething ſimple, uniform, invariable, and indiviſible; permanent,

permanent, tho' inſtantaneous, and endleſs without progreſſion. There are ſome remarkable expreſſions both in the Old and New Teſtament, alluding to this mode of exiſtence; in the former, God is denominated *I am* *; and in the latter, Chriſt ſays, *before Abraham was, I am* †: both evidently implying duration without ſucceſſion: from whence the ſchoolmen probably derive their obſcure notions of ſuch a kind of duration, which they explain by the more obſcure term of a *punctum ſtans*.

With the other mode of exiſtence we are ſufficiently acquainted, being that in which Providence has placed us, and all things around

* Exod. iv. 14. † John viii. 58.

us, during our reſidence on this terreſtrial globe; in which all ideas follow each other in our minds in a regular and uniform ſucceſſion, not unlike the tickings of a clock; and by that means all objects are preſented to our imaginations in the ſame progreſſive manner: and if any vary much from that deſtined pace, by too rapid, or too ſlow a motion, they immediately become to us totally imperceptible. We now perceive every one, as it paſſes, thro' a ſmall aperture ſeparately, as in the Camera Obſcura, and this we call time; but at the concluſion of this ſtate we may probably exiſt in a manner quite different; the window may be thrown open, the whole proſpect

appear

appear at one view, and all this apparatus, which we call time, be totally done away: for time is certainly nothing more, than the ſhifting of ſcenes neceſſary for the performance of this tragi-comical farce, which we are here exhibiting, and muſt undoubtedly end with the concluſion of the drama. It has no more a real eſſence, independent of thought and action, than ſight, hearing, and ſmell have independent of their proper organs, and the animals to whom they belong, and when they ceaſe to exiſt, time can be no more. There are alſo ſeveral paſſages in the ſcriptures, declaring this annihilation of time, at the conſummation of all things: *And the Angel, which I ſaw ſtand upon the ſea and*

the earth, lifted up his hand towards heaven, and ſwore by him that liveth for ever and ever, &c. that there ſhould be time no longer *.

To this opinion of the non-entity of time it has by ſome been objected, that time has many attributes and powers inherent in its nature; and that whatever has attributes and powers, muſt itſelf exiſt: it is infinite, ſay they, and eternal; it contains all things; and forces itſelf on our imaginations in the abſence of all other exiſtence: but to this it may be anſwered, that the human mind is able in the very ſame manner to realize nothing; and then all the ſame attributes and powers are applicable

* Rev. x. 5.

with equal propriety to that nothing, thus ſuppoſed to be ſomething:

* Nothing, thou elder brother ev'n to ſhade!
Thou had'ſt a Being, ere the world was made,
And well fix'd are alone of ending not afraid.

Nothing is infinite, and eternal; that is, hath neither beginning, nor end: it contains all things; that is, it begins where all exiſtence ends; and therefore ſurrounds, and contains all things: it forces itſelf on the mind, in the abſence of all exiſtence; that is, where we ſuppoſe there is no exiſtence, we muſt ſuppoſe there is nothing: this exact reſemblance of their attributes and powers, more plainly demonſtrates, that time is nothing.

From this non-exiſtence of time thus eſtabliſhed, many concluſions will

* Lord Rocheſter.

ariſe,

ariſe, both uſeful and entertaining; from whence perhaps new lights may be thrown on ſeveral ſpeculations religious and metaphyſical, whoſe outlines I ſhall juſt venture to trace, and leave them to be filled up by abler pens.

1ſt. If time be no more than the ſucceſſion of ideas, and actions, however theſe may be accelerated, or retarded, time will be juſt the ſame: that is, neither longer or ſhorter, provided the ſame ideas, and actions, ſucceed one another, as far, I mean, as it relates to Beings ſo thinking and acting. For inſtance, were the earth, and all the celeſtial bodies, to perform the ſame revolutions in one day, which they now perform in a whole year; and were all the ideas, actions, and

lives

lives of mankind haſtened on in the ſame proportion, the period of our lives would not be in the leaſt ſhortened; but that day would be exactly equal to the preſent year: if in the ſpace of ſeventy or eighty of theſe days a man was born, educated, and grown up, had exerciſed a profeſſion, had ſeen his children come to maturity, his grand-children ſucceed them, and, during this period had had all his ideas and actions, all his enjoyments and ſufferings, accelerated in the ſame proportion, he would not only ſeem to himſelf, and to all who lived in the ſame ſtate with him, and meaſured time by the ſame ſtandard, to have lived as long, but actually and in fact would have lived as

long

long as one, who reſides on this globe as great a number of our preſent years.

2dly. This being the caſe, it follows, that the life of every man muſt be longer, or ſhorter, in proportion to the number of his thoughts, and actions: for was it poſſible for a man to think and act as much in an hour, as in a year, that hour, as far as it related to him, would not only ſeem, but actually become a year. On the other hand, was it poſſible for a man totally to abſtain from thinking and acting for an hour, or a year, time, with regard to him, for that period, would have no exiſtence; or, could he keep one idea fixed in his mind, and continue one ſingle act during

the

the ſame ſpace, time, which is a ſucceſſion only of ideas and actions, muſt be equally annihilated: whether theſe ideas and actions are exerciſed on great or little occaſions, whether they are productive of pleaſing or painful ſenſations, with regard to this purpoſe their effects will be the ſame: neither their importance or conſequences will add any thing to time, but their numbers and celerity moſt undoubtedly will. Our lives therefore, when diverſified with a variety of objects, and buſied in a multiplicity of purſuits, tho' perhaps leſs happy, will certainly be longer, than when doſed away in ſloth, inactivity, and apathy.

3dly. From hence it is evident, that

that we can form no judgment of the duration of the lives, enjoyments, and ſufferings of other animals, with the progreſſion of whoſe ideas we are totally unacquainted, and who may be framed in that reſpect, as well as in many others, ſo widely different from ourſelves. The gaudy butterfly, that flutters in the ſunſhine but for a few months, may live as long as the ſtupid tortoiſe, that breathes for a century; the inſect, that ſurvives not one diurnal revolution of the ſun, may, for any thing we know, enjoy an age of happineſs; and the miſerable horſe, that appears to us to ſuffer the drudgery of ten or twenty years, may finiſh his laborious taſk in as many months, days, or hours.

4thly.

4thly. For the like reaſons we can judge but very imperfectly of what are real evils in the univerſal ſyſtem, whilſt we remain in this temporal ſtate of exiſtence, in which all things are exhibited to us by ſcraps, one after the other: for theſe detached portions, which viewed ſepa ately, ſeem but miſ-ſhapen blotches, may to Beings, who in an eternal ſtate ſee paſt, preſent, and future, all delineated on one canvaſs, appear as well-diſ-poſed ſhades neceſſary to render perfect the whole moſt beautiful landſkip. Nay, even pain, that taken ſingly is ſo pungent and diſagreeable a potion, when thrown into the cup of univerſal happineſs,

may perhaps add to it a flavour, which without this infuſion it could not have acquired.

5thly. If time has itſelf no exiſtence, it can never put an end to the exiſtence of any thing elſe; and this ſeems no inconcluſive argument for the immortality of the ſoul: for if any thing is, and no cauſe appears to us why it ſhould ceaſe to be, we can have no good reaſon to believe, that it will not continue. Whatever has no connection with time muſt be eternal: now the only property of the ſoul, with which we are acquainted, is thought, which bears no relation to time; whence it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the ſoul itſelf is equally unconnected with it, and

conſe-

conſequently eternal. Even in material Beings we ſee continual mutations, but can perceive no ſymptoms of annihilation; and therefore we have ſurely leſs cauſe to ſuſpect it in immaterial: from whence I am inclined to think, that the eſſences of all things are eternal, that is, unrelative to time, and that it is only our manner of perceiving them, that cauſes them to appear temporal to us; paſt, preſent, and future being not inherent in their natures, but only in our progreſſive mode of perception.

6thly. From what has been ſaid, we may perceive into what amazing abſurdities many of our ableſt divines and metaphyſicians have plunged, in their inveſtigations of eternity, for making which their receipt is uſually

this: they take of time a ſufficient quantity, and, chopping it in ſmall pieces, they diſpoſe them in imaginary lengths, which they diſtinguiſh by the names of minutes, hours, days, years, and ages: then feeling in their own minds a power of multiplying theſe as often as they think fit, they heap millions upon millions; and finding this power to be a machine, that may be worked backwards and forwards with equal facility, they extend their line both ways, and ſo their eternity is compleated, and fit for uſe: they then divide it in the middle, and out of a ſingle eternity they make two, as they term them, *a parte ante*, and *a parte poſt*; each of which having one end, may be drawn out, like a Juggler's ribband, as long as

they

they pleaſe. The contradictions ſo manifeſt in this ſyſtem, ſufficiently declare its falſhood: for in adopting it we muſt acknowledge, that each half of this eternity is equal to the whole; that in each the number of days cannot exceed that of the months, nor the months be more numerous than the years, they being all alike infinite; that whether it commenced yeſterday, or ten thouſand years ſince, the length of its duration muſt be the ſame; for the length depends not on the beginning, but on the end, but that cannot be different, where there is no end at all: the abſurdity of all theſe propoſitions is too glaring, to ſtand in need of any refutation; for it is evident, that whatever contains

parts, length, or numbers, can never be infinite; whatever had a beginning muſt have an end, becauſe beginning and ending are the modes of temporary exiſtence: what has no end could have no beginning, becauſe both are equally inconſiſtent with eternity. In truth, all theſe abſurdities ariſe from applying to eternity our ideas of time, which, being two modes of exiſtence intirely different, bear not the leaſt relation to each other: time is in its nature finite, and ſucceſſive; eternity infinite, and inſtantaneous; and therefore their properties are no more applicable to each other, than thoſe of ſounds to colours, or of colours to ſounds; and we can no more form eternity out of time,

than,

than, by mixing red, blue, and green, we can compoſe an anthem or an opera.

7thly. From hence appears the neceſſity, in our conſiderations on theſe ſubjects, of keeping our ideas of theſe two modes of exiſtence intirely and conſtantly diſtinct, as they themſelves are in nature: by which means we ſhall preſently ſweep away many of thoſe theological and metaphyſical cobwebs, which now encumber and diſgrace our moſt learned libraries; and cut ſhort many impertinent enquiries concerning the creation of the univerſe, God's foreknowledge and predeſtination, the præ-exiſtent and future ſtate of ſouls, the injuſtice of eternal puniſhments, and

the ſleep of the ſoul, with numberleſs others of the ſame kind, all derived from injudiciouſly blending and confounding theſe two kinds of exiſtence together, and applying notions and expreſſions to one, which can only with propriety belong to the other.

To enter largely into theſe abſtruſe and intricate ſubjects, would require a folio; I ſhall therefore only ſay one word or two to each.

It has been frequently aſked, why God created the univerſe at the time in which he did create it, and why he ſuffered millions of ages to paſs away before the commencement of ſo glorious a work? to this it may be replied with equal conciſeneſs and truth, that in fact no

ſuch

ſuch ages ever did or could paſs before it was created; nor was it created in any time at all; for neither the eſſence or actions of God have the moſt diſtant relation to time; he has been pleaſed in his infinite wiſdom to beſtow on ſome parts of his creation a temporal mode of exiſtence, and from this alone time derives its origin: to ſuppoſe time antecedent to temporal exiſtence, is to ſuppoſe effects to precede their cauſes; and not leſs abſurd, than to imagine, that there could be perception before ſenſitive Beings, or thought before intelligent Beings exiſted. This very queſtion proves the abſurdity of connecting time and eternity together; for if God's power of creating

is coæval with his exiſtence, that exiſtence eternal, and that eternity only time extended; this evident contradiction follows, that God, tho' always equally able, yet in fact never could create any thing ſo ſoon, but that he might have created it ſooner: that is in other words, that he never could create any thing as ſoon as he could. All this puzzle ariſes from our fooliſhly ſuppoſing, that eternal and temporal Beings muſt act in a manner ſimilar to each other: if we do any thing, it muſt be done at ſome time or other; but God acts in ways as different from ours, as inconceivable to us; his ways are not like our ways, nor his thoughts like our thoughts: one day is to him as a

thouſand

thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day; that is, neither of them, with his manner of exiſting, thinking, or acting, have any connection whatever.

All diſputes about God's foreknowledge and predeſtination, are of the ſame ſpecies, and derive their birth intirely from the ſame abſurd ſuppoſition. Foreknowledge and predeſtination imply ſucceſſion, and are relative to time, which has no relation to the eſſence or perception of the Creator of all things; and therefore, in the ſenſe uſually applied to them, cannot with any propriety be attributed to him. He knows all things, and ordains all things; but as all things are equally preſent to the divine intuition, it is impoſſible

impoſſible that he can foreknow or predeſtinate any thing.

Of the ſame kind are all queſtions concerning the præ-exiſtent, and future ſtate of the ſoul, ariſing likewiſe from confounding our ideas of theſe two modes of exiſtence, temporal and eternal: whenever the ſoul is united with a body, perceiving all things by ſucceſſion thro' material organs, it acquires ideas of time, and can form none of exiſtence unconnected with it; but whenever this union is diſſolved, it probably returns again to its native mode of eternal exiſtence, in which the whole circle of its perception being at once viſible, it has nothing further to do with time; it is neither old or young, it lives

no more in the ſeventeenth than in the ſeventh century, no nearer to the end than the beginning of the world: all ideas of years and ages, of præ-exiſtence and futurity, of beginning and ending, will be totally obliterated: and poſſibly it will be as incapable of forming any conceptions of time, as it is now of eternity. The ſoul therefore being quite unconnected with time, whenever it is unconnected with a body, cannot properly be ſaid to exiſt in another time, either prior or poſterior, but only in another manner.

Every argument alſo endeavouring to prove the injuſtice and diſproportion of eternal puniſhments for temporal offences, is founded on the ſame erroneous principles, and

admit

admits of the ſame anſwer; that all computations of the magnitude of ſuch puniſhments from their duration, by heaping years and ages upon each other, are abſurd, and inconſiſtent with that ſtate in which they are to be inflicted: crimes will there be puniſhed according to the degrees of their malignity, but neither for a long, or a ſhort, nor for any time at all: for all puniſhments muſt be correſpondent to the ſtate in which they are ſuffered: in an eternal ſtate, they muſt be eternal, in a temporal they muſt be temporal; for it is equally impoſſible, that a Being can be puniſhed for a time, where no time is, as that it ſhould be puniſhed everlaſtingly in a ſtate which itſelf cannot laſt. As therefore,

therefore, from the nature of things, this diſpenſation is neceſſary, it cannot be unjuſt, and from the infinite wiſdom and goodneſs of the Author of nature, we may reaſonably preſume that it cannot be diſproportioned to its ſeveral objects.

The non-entity of time will ſerve likewiſe to ſettle a late ingenious controverſy, and ſhew, that, like moſt others of the kind, it is a diſpute only upon words: this controverſy is concerning the ſleep of the ſoul; that is, whether it enters into a ſtate of happineſs or miſery immediately on its diſſolution from the body, or remains in a ſtate of profound inſenſibility, till the general judgment, and then receives its final ſentence, and ſuffers its execution:

ecution: for if time is nothing but the thoughts and actions which paſs in it, the condition of the ſoul, whether it ſleeps or not, will be exactly the ſame; nor will the final ſentence be one moment deferred by ſuch a ſtate of inſenſibility, how long ſoever it may continue; for tho', during that period, many revolutions of the ſun, and of empires, may take place, many millions of thoughts and actions may paſs, which not only meaſure time, but create it; yet with regard to the ſoul ſo ſleeping, none of theſe, that is, no time will paſs at all; and, if no time intervenes, judgment, however remote with regard to others, will as inſtantly follow its diſſolution, as if that had happened

the precedent moment. But if, according to the foregoing principles, the ſoul in a ſeparate ſtate bears no relation to time, then no event in which it is there concerned can be before or after another, either nearer or farther from any period, from death or judgment, from the creation or diſſolution of this planetary ſyſtem: this we ſee muſt at once put an end to all diſputes on this ſubject, and render the uſe of ſoporifics intirely needleſs.

After all that has been here advanced, I am not inſenſible, that we are here ſo conſtantly converſant with temporal objects, and ſo totally unacquainted with eternal, that few, very few will ever be able

able to abſtract exiſtence from time, or comprehend that any thing can exiſt out of, and unconnected with it: in vain ſhould I ſuggeſt, that the various planets are peopled by the divine wiſdom with a variety of Beings, and even this terreſtrial globe with innumerable creatures, whoſe ſituations are ſo different, that their manner of exiſtence is quite unknown and incomprehenſible to each other; that millions inhabit the impenetrable receſſes of the unfathomable ocean, who can no more form conceptions of any exiſtence beyond the limits of that their native element, than we ourſelves can beyond the boundaries of time; and that therefore in reality, time may be no more neceſſary

ceſſary to exiſtence than water, tho' the mode of that exiſtence we are unable to comprehend. But, I well know, theſe analogous arguments have little weight; the prejudice of education, the ſtrength of habit, and the force of language, all formed on the ſuppoſed union of exiſtence with time, will perſuade men to reject this hypotheſis as vain and chimerical. To all buſy men, and men of buſineſs, to all jogging on in the beaten roads of profeſſions, or ſcrambling up the precipices of ambition, theſe conſiderations muſt appear unprofitable illuſions, if not incomprehenſible nonſenſe; for to endeavour to convince a merchant ſubſiſting on long credit, a lawyer

inriched by delay, a divine who has purchaſed a next preſentation, a general who is in no hurry to fight, or a miniſter whoſe object is the continuance of his power, that time is nothing, is an arduous taſk, and very unlikely to be attended with ſucceſs. Whoever deſires to taſte or underſtand ſuch abſtracted ſpeculations, muſt leave for a while the noiſy buſtle of worldly occupations, and retire into the ſequeſtered ſhades of ſolitude and contemplation: from whence he will return certainly not richer, poſſibly not wiſer, but probably more ſuſceptible of amuſement from his own company for want of better, and more able to draw

entertain-

entertainment from his own imaginations: which in his journey thro' life he will often find an acquisition not altogether inconsiderable.

DISQUISITION V.

ON THE ANALOGY BETWEEN THINGS MATERIAL AND INTELLECTUAL.

AS all things, both material and intellectual, are derived from the ſame omnipotent author, we ſhall find, on an accurate examination, that there is a certain analogy, which runs thro' them all, well worthy of our attention and admiration; that is, that there are in the elements of the material world, and in the paſſions and actions of mankind, powers and propenſities of a ſimilar nature, which operate

in

in a ſimilar manner, throughout every part of the material, moral, and political ſyſtem. But this theory, rather abſtruſe, is difficult to be explained, and will be beſt elucidated by examples, which every day fall within our obſervation.

In the material world, for inſtance, we ſee all diſorders cured by their own exceſſes: a ſultry calm fails not to produce a ſtorm, which diſſipates the noxious vapours, and reſtores a purer air; the fierceſt tempeſt, exhauſted by its own violence, at length ſubſides; and an intenſe ſun-ſhine, whilſt it parches up the thirſty earth, exhales clouds, which quickly water it with refreſhing ſhowers. Juſt ſo in the moral

world, all our paſſions and vices, by their exceſſes, defeat themſelves; exceſſive rage renders men impotent to execute the miſchiefs which they threaten; repeated treacheries make them unable to deceive, becauſe none will truſt them; and extreme profligacy, by the diſeaſes which it occaſions, deſtroys their appetites and works an unwilling reformation.

As in the natural world, the elements are reſtrained in their moſt deſtructive effects, by their mutual oppoſition; ſo in the moral, are the vices of mankind prevented from being totally ſubverſive of ſociety, by their continually counteracting each other: profuſion reſtores to the public the wealth which ava-

rice

rice has detained from it for a time; envy clips the towering wings of ambition; and even revenge, by it's terrors, prevents many injuries and oppreſſions: the treachery of the thief diſcovers his accomplices; the perfidy of the proſtitute brings the highwayman to juſtice; and the villainy of the aſſaſſin puts an end to the cruelty of a tyrant.

In the material world, the middle climates, fartheſt removed from the extremes of heat and cold, are the moſt ſalubrious, and moſt pleaſant: ſo in life, the middle ranks are ever moſt favourable to virtue, and to happineſs; which dwell not in the extremes of poverty or riches.

As throughout the various regions of the earth, advantages and inconveniences are diſtributed with a more impartial hand than we on a tranſitory view are apt to imagine; ſo are they to the various conditions of human life: if the more ſouthern climates are gilded with a brighter ſun-ſhine, perfumed with more fragrant gales, and decorated with a greater profuſion of plants and flowers, they are at the ſame time perpetually expoſed to peſtilential heats, infeſted with noxious animals, torn by hurricanes, and rocked by earthquakes, unknown to the rougher regions of the North. In like manner, if the rich enjoy luxuries, from which the poor are debarred, they ſuffer many

diſeaſes

diſeaſes and diſquietudes, from which thoſe are fortunately exempted.

We behold with admiration the vivid azure of the vaulted ſky, and variegated colours of the diſtant clouds; but, if we approach them on the ſummit of ſome lofty mountain, we diſcover that the beauteous ſcene is all illuſion, and find ourſelves involved only in a dreary fog or a tempeſtuous whirlwind: juſt ſo, in youth, we look up with pleaſing expectation to the pleaſures and honours, which we fondly imagine will attend maturer age; at which, if we arrive, the brilliant proſpect vaniſhes in diſappointment, and we meet with nothing more than

than a dull inactivity or turbulent contentions.

The properties of the various ſeaſons of the year, the gaiety of ſpring, the vigour of ſummer, the ſerenity of autumn, and the gloom of winter, have been ſo often aſſimilated to the correſponding periods of human life; the dangers and diſquietudes of grandeur ſo often compared to the tempeſtuous ſituation of lofty mountains; and the quiet ſafety of inferior ſtations, to the calm ſecurity of the humbler vale, that a repetition of them here would be impertinent, and uſeleſs; yet they all contribute to point out that analogy which uniformly pervades every part of the creation with which we are acquainted.

Between

Between the material and political world, this analogy is ſtill more conſpicuous: in the former, every particle of matter, of which the vaſt machine is compoſed, is actuated by that wonderful principle of attraction, which reſtrains, impels, and directs its progreſs to the deſtined end; in the latter, every individual of which the great political body is formed, is actuated by ſelf-intereſt, a principle exactly ſimilar, which, by a conſtant endeavour to draw all things to itſelf, reſtrains, impels, and directs his paſſions, deſigns, and actions to the important ends of government and ſociety. As the firſt operates with force in proportion to the contents of the body in which it reſides, ſo does the latter;

in individuals it is ſmall, in ſocieties greater, and in populous and extenſive empires moſt powerful. As the one acts with power in proportion to its diſtance, ſo does the other; for we conſtantly find, that a ſmall benefit beſtowed on men as individuals, will influence them much more than a larger, which they may receive from national proſperity; and a trifling loſs, which immediately affects themſelves, is more regretted, than one more conſiderable, which they feel only thro' the medium of public calamities. In another reſpect, alſo, they greatly reſemble each other; they are both productive of many miſchiefs, yet both neceſſary to the well-being and preſervation of the whole. It

is attraction that plunges us in the ocean; daſhes us againſt the rocks; tumbles us from the precipice; and pulls down the tottering fabric on our heads: but it is this, alſo, that conſtitutes all body, that binds together the terreſtrial globe, guides the revolving planets in their courſes, and without it not only the whole material ſyſtem would be diſſolved, but I am inclined to think, that matter itſelf muſt be annihilated; for, matter being infinitely diviſible, without this property, it muſt be infinitely divided; and infinite diviſion ſeems to be nothing leſs than annihilation: for without attraction there could be no coheſion, without coheſion no ſolidity, and without ſolidity no matter.

matter. In like manner, ſelf-intereſt, or what we miſtake for it, is the ſource of all our crimes, and moſt of our ſufferings. It is this, that ſeduces the profligate, by the proſpect of pleaſure; tempts the villain, by the hopes of gain; and bribes the hero with the voice of fame: but it is this alſo that is the ſource of all our connections, civil, religious, political, and commercial; that binds us together in families, in cities, and in nations, and directs our united labours to the public benefit: and without its influence, arts and learning, trade and manufactures, would be at an end, and all government, like matter by infinite diviſion, would be annihilated.

The natural world ſubſiſts by a perpetual contention of the elements of which it is compoſed, the political by as conſtant a conteſt of its internal parties, ſtruggling for ſuperiority. In the former, the great ſyſtem is carried on by a continual rotation of good and evil, alternately producing, and ſucceeding each other: continued ſunſhine produces tempeſts; theſe diſcharge themſelves in refreſhing rains; rains cauſe inundations, which, after ſome ravages, ſubſiding, aſſiſt commerce and agriculture, by ſcouring out the beds of rivers, and fertilizing lands; and ſunſhine returns again: ſo in the latter, long peace, the political ſunſhine, generates corruption, luxury, and faction, the parents of

deſtructive

deſtructive wars; war for a time awakens national vigour, and pours down wealth and plunder, then cauſes inundations of poverty and diſtreſs; diſtreſs calls forth induſtry, agriculture, and commerce, and peace returns once more.

As night and day, winter and ſummer, are alternately circulated over the various regions of the globe; ſo are poverty and wealth, idleneſs and induſtry, ignorance and ſcience, deſpotiſm and liberty, by an uniform proceſs ariſing from their own natural conſtitutions, and their invariable effects upon each other. In poor countries, neceſſity incites induſtry, and cheapneſs of proviſions invites traders and manufacturers to reſide; this ſoon introduces

troduces wealth, learning, and liberty; and theſe are as ſoon followed by profuſion, faction, and licentiouſneſs; commerce will keep no ſuch company, but, like a bird of paſſage, migrates to climes by poverty and cheapneſs better adapted to her conſtitution: theſe, in their turns, grow rich, civilized, free, diſſolute, and licentious in the ſame manner, and are ſucceſſively deſerted for the ſame reaſon, and the ſame circle is again renewed.

In the material world, the conſtant circulation of the air, and flux and reflux of the tides, preſerve thoſe elements from a putrid ſtagnation; ſo in the political, controverſies, civil and religious, keep up the ſpirits of national communities,

and prevent them from ſinking into a ſtate of indolence and ignorance: but if either exceed the bounds of moderation, their conſequences are extremely fatal; the former producing ſtorms and inundations, and the latter anarchy and confuſion. Lord Bacon obſerves, that war is to ſtates, what exerciſe is to individuals; and in this they are extremely ſimilar; a proper proportion may contribute to health and vigour, but too much emaciates, and wears out a conſtitution.

Thus, by a wiſe and wonderful diſpoſition of things material and intellectual, God has infuſed into them all powers and propenſities greatly analogous, by which they are enabled and compelled, in a ſimilar

ſimilar manner, to perform their reſpective parts in the general ſyſtem, to reſtrain their own exceſſes, and to call back each other, whenever they too far deviate from their deſtined ends; and has ſaid unto every thing, as well as to the ocean, to night and day, to winter and ſummer, to heat and cold, to rain and ſunſhine, to happineſs and miſery, to ſcience and ignorance, to war and peace, to liberty and deſpotiſm, "Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no farther." Theſe amazing inſtances of infinite wiſdom in the œconomy of things, preſenting every where an analogy ſo remarkable, are well worthy of our higheſt admiration; yet have been but little obſerved, becauſe theſe divine diſpoſitions ap-

pear to us to be no more than the neceſſary conſequences of previous cauſes, and the invariable operations of nature, and we forget that nature is nothing more than the art of her omnipotent author.

DISQUI-

DISQUISITION VI.

ON RATIONAL CHRISTIANITY.

TO ſeveral learned and ingenious writers, ſome doctrines of the Chriſtian religion have appeared ſo contradictory to all the principles of reaſon and equity, that they cannot aſſent to them, nor believe that they can be derived from the Fountain of all truth and juſtice. In order therefore to ſatisfy themſelves and others, who may labour under the ſame difficulties, they have undertaken the arduous taſk of reconciling revelation and reaſon; and great would have

been their merits, had they begun at the right end, that is, had they endeavoured to exalt the human underſtanding to the comprehenſion of the ſublime doctrines of the goſpel, rather than to reduce thoſe doctrines to the low ſtandard of human reaſon; but, unfortunately for themſelves and many others, they have made choice of the latter method, and, as the ſhorteſt way to effect it, have with inconſiderate raſhneſs expunged from the New Teſtament every divine declaration, which agrees not exactly with their own notions of truth and rectitude; and this they have attempted by no other means, than by abſurd explanations, or by bold aſſertions that they are not there, in direct

contradiction

contradiction to the ſenſe of language, and the whole tenour of thoſe writings; as ſome philoſophers have ventured, in oppoſition to all men's ſenſes, and even to their own, to deny the exiſtence of matter, for no other reaſon, but becauſe they find in it properties which they are unable to account for. Thus they have reduced Chriſtianity to a mere ſyſtem of ethics, and retain no part of it but the moral, which in fact is no characteriſtic part of it at all, as this, though in a manner leſs perfect, makes a part of every religion which ever appeared in the world. This ingenious method of converting Chriſtianity into Deiſm, cannot fail of acquiring many reſpectable proſelytes; for every vir-

tuous and pious man, who would be a Chriſtian if he could, that is, who reverences the name of Chriſtianity, but cannot aſſent to it's tenets, is glad to liſt under the ſtandard of any leader, who can teach him to be a Chriſtian, without believing any one principle of that inſtitution.

Whoever will look back into the theological annals of this country, will find, that during the laſt century, the faſhionable philoſophers were for the moſt part Atheiſts, who aſcribed every thing to chance, fate, or neceſſity; excluſive of all intelligence or deſign: theſe mighty Giants, who fought againſt Heaven, being at length overthrown by the abſurdity of their own principles,

and

and the ſuperior abilities of their adverſaries, retreated, about the beginning of the preſent, to the more tenable fort of Deiſm; but here again, being frequently worſted, they at laſt took ſhelter under the covert-way of rational Chriſtianity, where they now make their ſtand, and attack revelation with leſs odium, and more ſucceſs, than from the open plains of profeſſed Deiſm, becauſe many are ready to reject the whole ſubſtance of the Chriſtian inſtitution, who would be ſhocked at the thought of relinquiſhing the name.

If Chriſtianity is to be learned out of the New Teſtament, and words have any meaning affixed to them, the fundamental principles

of

of it are theſe,—That mankind come into this world in a depraved and fallen condition;—that they are placed here for a while, to give them an opportunity to work out their ſalvation, that is, by a virtuous and pious life to purge off this guilt and depravity, and recover their loſt ſtate of happineſs and innocence, in a future life;—that this they are unable to perform, without the grace and aſſiſtance of God;—and that after their beſt endeavours, they cannot hope for pardon from their own merits, but only from the merits of Chriſt, and the atonement made for their tranſgreſſions by his ſufferings and death. This is clearly the ſum and ſubſtance of the Chriſtian diſpenſation; and ſo

adverſe

adverſe is it to all the principles of human reaſon, that, if brought before her tribunal, it muſt inevitably be condemned. If we give no credit to its divine authority, any attempt to reconcile them is uſeleſs; and, if we believe it, preſumptuous in the higheſt degree. To prove the reaſonableneſs of a revelation, is in fact to deſtroy it; becauſe a revelation implies information of ſomething which reaſon cannot diſcover, and therefore muſt be different from its deductions, or it would be no revelation. If God had told us, that we come into this world in a ſtate of perfect innocence, void of all propenſities to evil; that our depravity proceeds entirely from the abuſe of that free-

will,

will, with which he has been pleaſed to endue us; that, if in this life we purſue a virtuous conduct, we have a right to be rewarded, and if a vicious, we may expect to be puniſhed in another, except we prevent it by repentance and reformation, and that theſe are always in our own power—if God had informed us of nothing more, this would have been no revelation, becauſe it is juſt what our reaſon, properly employed, might have taught us: but if he has thought proper, by ſupernatural means, to aſſure us, that our ſituation, our relations, our depravity, our merits, and our powers, are all of a kind extremely different from what we imagine; and that his diſpenſations towards

us.

us are founded on principles which cannot be explained to us, becauſe, in our preſent ſtate, we are unable to comprehend them; this is a revelation, which we may believe, or not, according to our opinion of its authority; but let us not reaſon it into no revelation at all.

The writers of the New Teſtament frequently declare, that the religion which they teach, is a myſtery, that is, a revelation of the diſpenſations of God to mankind, which without ſupernatural information we never could have diſcovered; thus St. Paul ſays, "Having made known to us the myſtery of his will." What then is this myſtery? not the moral precepts

cepts of the goſpel; for they are no more a myſtery than the Ethics of Ariſtotle, or the Offices of Cicero: the myſtery conſiſts alone in theſe very doctrines, which the Rationaliſt explodes, becauſe they diſagree with the concluſions of his reaſon; that is, becauſe they are myſteries, as they are avowed to be by thoſe who taught them.

But theſe bold advocates for reaſon, underſtand not its extent, its powers, or the proper application of them. The utmoſt perfection of human reaſon, is the knowledge of it's own defects, and the limits of its own confined powers, which are extremely narrow. It is a lamp which ſerves us very well for the common occupations of life, which

are near at hand, but can ſhew us no proſpect at a diſtance: on all ſpeculative ſubjects, it is exceedingly fallacious, but in none ſo frequently miſleads us, as in our religious and political inquiries; becauſe, in the former, we draw concluſions without premiſes; and in the latter, upon falſe ones. Thus, for inſtance, reaſon tells us, that a Creator, infinitely powerful and good, could never permit any evil, natural or moral, to have a place in his works; becauſe his goodneſs muſt induce him, and his power enable him, to exclude them: this argument is unanſwerable by any thing, but experience, which every hour confutes it. Thus again, reaſon aſſures us, that ſufferings, though they

may

may be juſt puniſhments for paſt crimes, and a means to prevent them for the future, can never be compenſations for them; much leſs can the ſufferings of one Being atone for the guilt of another: againſt this no objection can be urged, except the belief of mankind, in all ages and nations, and the expreſs declarations of revelation; which unanimouſly contradict it, and afford ſufficient grounds for our concurrence. In theſe two inſtances we are deceived by miſapplying our reaſon to ſubjects in which we have no premiſes to reaſon upon; for, being totally ignorant on what plan the univerſal ſyſtem is formed and ſupported, we can be no judges of what is

good

good or evil with regard to the whole; and, as we know not for what ends either guilt or ſufferings were ever admitted, we muſt be unable to comprehend what connections between them may poſſibly be derived from thoſe ends. In our political diſcuſſions, reaſon equally miſleads us; in theſe, ſhe preſents us with ſchemes of government, in which, by the moſt admirable contrivances, juſtice is ſo impartially adminiſtered, property ſo well guarded, and liberty ſo effectually ſecured, that in theory it ſeems impoſſible, that any people under ſuch wiſe regulations can poſſibly fail of being happy, virtuous, and free; but experiment ſoon convinces us, that they are inade-

quate to theſe ſalutary purpoſes, and that, in practice, they are productive only of anarchy and confuſion. Here our errors ariſe from reaſoning on falſe premiſes, that is, from ſuppoſing that mankind will act on principles incompatible with the vices, the follies, and the paſſions of human nature. If reaſon, therefore, is ſo fallible a judge in the little and low concerns of human policy, with which ſhe is daily converſant, how abſurd is the Rationaliſt, who conſtitutes her ſole arbiter in the diſcuſſions of the moſt ſu blim ſubjects, of which ſhe has not the leaſt comprehenſion, the attributes and diſpenſations of the Almighty, our relations to him, and

our

our connections with paſt and future ſtates of exiſtence!

Of all men, who are called Chriſtians, the Rationaliſt ſeems to have the leaſt pretence to that denomination: the Church of England acknowledges the belief of all the doctrines of this inſtitution in her Articles, though in them they are ill explained, and worſe expreſſed; the Church of Rome aſſents to them all, but adds many without ſufficient authority; the Calviniſt denies them not, but diſgraces them by harſh, obſcure, and abſurd comments; the Quaker admits them, but is bewildered by enthuſiaſtic notions of partial inſpirations; and the Methodiſt ſubſcribes to them all with the utmoſt veneration, but

(inconſiſtently) depreciates the merit of moral duties, at the ſame time that he inſiſts on the practice of the moſt rigid; but the Rationaliſt reprobates the whole, as impious, ridiculous, and contradictory to the juſtice of God, and the reaſon of man. Nor is he leſs adverſe to the ſpirit, than to the letter of this religion: the true Chriſtian is humble, teachable, and diffident; the Rationaliſt is aſſuming, obſtinate, and ſelf-ſufficient: the Chriſtian hopeth all things, feareth all things, and believeth all things; the Rationaliſt hopeth for nothing, but from his own merits, feareth nothing from his own depravity, and believeth nothing, the grounds of which he cannot perfectly underſtand.

ſtand. Why then muſt he be a Chriſtian? no man is now compelled to come in, nor more obliged to be a Chriſtian, than a Free-Maſon; the belief of it is not neceſſary to his advancement in life, nor his progreſs in any profeſſion; we know, that he may be a lawyer, a phyſician, or even a divine, without it. If, on an impartial enquiry, he is a religious and moral Deiſt, why not own it? Such were Socrates, Plato, and Cicero; and it is ſtill a character by no means diſgraceful to a virtuous man. I blame no one for want of faith, but for want of ſincerity; not for being no Chriſtian, but for pretending to be one, without believing. The profeſſed Deiſt gives

Chriſtianity fair play; if ſhe cannot defend herſelf, let her fall; but the rational Chriſtian aſſaſſinates her in the dark: the firſt attacks Chriſt, as did the multitude, with ſwords and ſtaves; the latter, like Judas, betrays him with a kiſs.

DISQUISITION VII.

ON GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL LIBERTY.

IF any one caſts his eye on the title of this eſſay, ſhort as it is, he will ſcarcely be perſuaded to read any farther; as he will rationally conclude, that, on a ſubject ſo hackneyed by the beſt and worſt writers of all ages, from Ariſtotle to the news-paper politicians of the preſent times, nothing can be added, which can afford either inſtruction or entertainment: but ſo many abſurd principles, concerning government and liberty, have of late been diſſeminated with unuſual

induſtry; principles as falſe as miſchievous, as inconſiſtent with common ſenſe as with all human ſociety; that it ſeems neceſſary that they ſhould not paſs quite unnoticed, eſpecially as they require nothing more, than to be fairly ſtated, to be refuted. The moſt conſiderable of them are the following; to each of which I ſhall ſay a few words.

1ſt. That all men are born equal.

2dly. That all men are born free.

3dly. That all government is derived from the people.

4thly. That all government is a compact between the governors and the governed.

5thly. That no government ought to laſt any longer, than it continues

tinues to be of equal advantage to the two contracting parties, that is, to the governed, as to the governors.

Firſt then; That all men are born equal; by which propoſition, if it is only meant, that all men are equally born, that is, that one man is as much born as another, I ſhall not diſpute its truth: but in every other ſenſe it is intirely falſe; for we daily ſee, that ſome are born with beautiful and healthy bodies, and ſome with frames diſtorted, and filled with the moſt deplorable diſeaſes; ſome with minds fraught with the ſeeds of wiſdom and genius, others with thoſe of idiotiſm and madneſs; ſome, by the laws and conſtitutions of their countries, are

born to the inheritance of affluent fortunes and diſtinguiſhed honours, others to a life of poverty, labour, and obſcurity. How theſe can be ſaid to be born equal, I cannot comprehend. If by this propoſition is to be underſtood, that, at the time of their birth, all men are poſſeſſed of an equal ſhare of power, wealth, wiſdom, learning, and virtue; when they are equally incapable of poſſeſſing any; this would be no leſs ridiculous, than to aſſert, that all men are born with teeth of the ſame length, when none of them are born with any teeth at all. But, ſuppoſing they were all born equal; would this prove, what is always intended to be proved by it, that they ought always to continue ſo?

or

or can any argument be drawn from thence, againſt their future inequality, and ſubordination? muſt no man preſume to be ſix feet high, becauſe perhaps he was born of the ſame ſize as another, who is now but four? muſt no man aſſume power over another, becauſe they were born equal, that is, becauſe at their birth they were both incapable of exerciſing any power whatever? Thus, we ſee, this mighty argument, drawn from the ſuppoſed natural equality of mankind, by which all powers and principalities are threatened to be overthrown, is intirely falſe, and if true, is nothing to the purpoſe for which it has been ſo often and ſo pompouſly introduced.

Secondly;

Secondly; That all men are born free. This is ſo far from being true, that the firſt infringement of this liberty is being born at all; which is impoſed upon them, without their conſent, given either by themſelves or their repreſentatives; and it may eaſily be ſhewn, that man, by the conſtitution of his nature, never ſubſiſts a free and independent Being, from the firſt to the laſt moment of his reſidence on this terreſtrial globe: where, during the firſt nine months of his exiſtence, he is confined in a dark and ſultry priſon, debarred from light and air; 'till at length, by an Habeas Corpus brought by the hand of ſome kind deliverer, he is ſet at liberty: but what kind of liberty does he then enjoy?

enjoy? he is bound hand and foot, and fed upon bread and water, for as long a period; no ſooner is he unbound, than he makes ſo bad a uſe of his liberty, that it becomes neceſſary that he ſhould be placed in a ſtate of the ſevereſt diſcipline, firſt under a nurſe, and then a ſchoolmaſter, both equal tyrants in their ſeveral departments; by whom he is again confined without law, condemned without a jury, and whipt without mercy. In this ſtate of ſlavery he continues many years, and at the expiration of it, he is obliged to commence an involuntary ſubject of ſome civil government; to whoſe authority he muſt ſubmit, however ingeniouſly he may diſpute her right, or be juſtly

hanged

hanged for diſobedience to her laws. And this is the ſum total of human liberty. Perhaps it may be ſaid, that all this may be ingenious ridicule, but cannot be intended for ſerious argument; to which I reply, that it is the moſt ſerious argument that can be offered, becauſe it is derived from the works, and the will of our Creator; and evidently ſhews, that man was never deſigned by him to be an independent and ſelf-governed Being, but to be trained up in a ſtate of ſubordination and government in the preſent life, to fit him for one more perfect in another: and, if it was not a reflection too ſerious, I ſhould add, that, in the numerous catalogue of human vices, there is not one, which ſo compleatly

diſqualifies him from being a member of that celeſtial community, as a factious and turbulent diſpoſition, and an impatience of controul; which frequently aſſumes the honourable title of the love of liberty.

Thirdly; That all government is derived from the people. This is another fallacious propoſition; which in one ſenſe is true, but, with regard to the principles ſo often eſtabliſhed upon it, intirely falſe. It is true, indeed, that all government is ſo far derived from the people, that there could be no government if there were no people to be governed: if there were no ſubjects there could be no kings, nor parliaments if there were no conſtituents, nor ſhepherds if there were no ſheep; but the inference

uſually

uſually drawn from this propoſition is utterly falſe, which is, that, becauſe all government is derived from the people, the people have a right to reſume it, and adminiſter it themſelves, whenever they pleaſe. But whatever claim they may have to this right, the exerciſe of it is impracticable, from the very nature of government; for all government muſt conſiſt of the governors, and the governed; if the people at large are the governors, where ſhall we be able to find the governed? All government is power, with which ſome are intruſted, to controul the actions of others; but how is it poſſible that every man ſhould have a power to controul the actions of every man? this would be a form of government,

government, which we have heard ſometimes recommended as the moſt perfect, in which all are governed by all; that is, in other words, where there is no government at all. I agree with theſe pretended patriots, that the people in every country have a right to reſiſt manifeſt grievances and oppreſſions, to change their governors, and even their conſtitutions, on great and extraordinary occaſions; whenever they groan under the rod of tyranny, they have a right to ſhake it off, and form a conſtitution more productive of liberty; and, in like manner, if they find themſelves torn by irreconcileable factions, and debilitated by internal contentions, they have an equal right to change

it for a government more arbitrary and deciſive. But we ſhall not agree ſo well in our definition of that important and miſapplied term 'the people;' by which I would be underſtood to mean the whole body of a nation, adviſed and directed by the moſt reſpectable members of it; who are poſſeſſed of rank, property, wiſdom, and experience: But who are thoſe in this country, whom our modern demagogues diſtinguiſh by this name, and veſt with this ſupreme dominion? Not the hereditary peers of the realm; not the repreſentatives of this very people in parliament aſſembled; not the paſtors of the church, the ſages of the law, or the magiſtrates who are guardians of the public ſafety;

not

not the poſſeſſors of landed property, the opulent ſtockholder, or the wealthy merchant. Theſe are all repreſented as tools of miniſters, lovers of ſlavery, united in a conſpiracy to deſtroy their country and ruin themſelves: they point out to us no defenders of our liberties or properties, but thoſe who have themſelves neither; no public-ſpirit, but in the garrets of Grub-ſtreet; no reformation, but from the purlieus of St. Giles's; nor one Solon, or Lycurgus, but who is to emerge from the tin-mines of Cornwal, or the coal-pits of Newcaſtle. Theſe are not the people whom I ſhould chuſe to truſt with unlimited power, becauſe I know they are totally incapable of employing it to any ſa-

lutary purpoſe, even for themſelves; and, whatever might be our grievances, redreſs from ſuch hands would be much more intolerable.

Fourthly; That all government is a compact between the governors and the governed. This imaginary compact is repreſented by ſome, as a formal agreement entered into by the two contracting parties, by which the latter gives up part of their natural independence, in exchange for protection granted by the former; without which voluntary ſurrender, no one man, or body of men, could have a right to controul the actions of another; and ſome have gone ſo far as to aſſert, that this ſurrender cannot be made binding by repreſentation, that

that parents cannot conſent to it for their children, or nations for individuals, but that every one muſt give his perſonal concurrence, and that on this alone the conſtitution of every government is or ought to be founded: but all this is a ridiculous fiction, intended only to ſubvert all government, and let mankind looſe to prey upon each other; for, in fact, no ſuch compact ever was propoſed or agreed to, no ſuch natural independence ever poſſeſſed, and conſequently can never have been given up. We hear a great deal about the conſtitutions of different ſtates, by which are underſtood ſome particular modes of government, ſettled at ſome particular times, which ought

to be ſupported with religious veneration through all ſucceeding ages: in ſome of theſe, the people are ſuppoſed to have a right to greater degrees of liberty than in others, having made better bargains for themſelves, and given up leſs of their natural independence: but this, and all concluſions drawn from theſe premiſes, muſt be falſe, becauſe the facts on which they are founded are not true; for no ſuch conſtitutions, eſtabliſhed on general conſent, are any where to be found; all which, we ſee, are the offſprings of force or fraud, of accident, and the circumſtances of the times, and muſt perpetually change with thoſe circumſtances: in all of them, the people have an equal right to preſerve

ſerve or regain their liberty, whenever they are able. But the queſtion is not, what right they have to liberty, but, what degree of it they are capable of enjoying, without accompliſhing their own deſtruction. In ſome countries this is very ſmall, and in none can it be very great, becauſe the depravity of human nature will not permit it. Compact is repugnant to the very nature of government; whoſe eſſence is compulſion, and which originates always from neceſſity, and never from choice or compact; and it is the moſt egregious abſurdity, to reaſon from the ſuppoſed rights of mankind in an imaginary ſtate of nature, a ſtate the moſt unnatural, becauſe in ſuch a ſtate they never

did or can ſubſiſt, or were ever deſigned for. The natural ſtate of man is by no means a ſtate of ſolitude and independence, but of ſociety and ſubordination; all the effects of human art are parts of his nature, becauſe the power of producing them is beſtowed upon him by the author of it. It is as natural for men to build cities, as for birds to build neſts; and to live under ſome kind of government, as for bees and ants; without which he can no more ſubſiſt than thoſe ſocial and induſtrious inſects; nor has he either more right, or power, than they, to refuſe his ſubmiſſion. But if every man was poſſeſſed of this natural independence, and had a right to ſurrender it on a bargain,

he

he muſt have an equal right to retain it; then he has a right to chuſe, whether he will purchaſe protection at the price of freedom, or whether he prefers liberty and plunder to ſafety and conſtraint: a large majority of mankind, who have neither property nor principles, would undoubtedly make choice of the latter, and all theſe might rob, and murder, and commit all manner of crimes with impunity; for, if this their claim to natural independence is well founded, they could not be juſtly amenable to any tribunal upon earth, and thus the world would ſoon become a ſcene of univerſal rapine and bloodſhed. This ſhews into what abſurdities we run, whenever we

reaſon

reaſon from ſpeculative principles, without attending to practicability and experience: for the real truth is no more than this, Every man, by the conſtitution of human nature, comes into the world under ſuch a degree of authority and reſtraint as is neceſſary for the preſervation and happineſs of his ſpecies and himſelf; this is no more left to his choice, than whether he will come into the world, or not; and this obligation he carries about with him, ſo long as he continues in it. Hence he is bound to ſubmit to the laws and conſtitution of every country in which he reſides, and is juſtly puniſhable for diſobedience to them. To aſk a man whether he chuſes to be ſubject to any law or government,

is to aſk him, whether he chuſes to be a man, or a wild beaſt, and wiſhes to be treated accordingly. So far are men from being poſſeſſed of this natural independence, on which ſo many ſyſtems of anarchy have been erected, that ſubmiſſion to authority is eſſential to humanity, and a principal condition on which it is beſtowed: man is evidently made for ſociety, and ſociety cannot ſubſiſt without government, and therefore government is as much a part of human nature, as a hand, a heart, or a head; all theſe are frequently applied to the worſt of purpoſes, and ſo is government; but it would be ridiculous from thence to argue, that we ſhould live longer and happier without them. The Supreme Governor of

the

the world has not determined who ſhall be his vicegerents, nor what forms of government ſhall be adopted; but he has unalterably decreed that there ſhall be ſome; and therefore, though no particular governors can lay claim to a divine right of ruling, yet government itſelf is of divine inſtitution, as much as eating, and for the ſame reaſon, becauſe we cannot ſubſiſt without it.

Fifthly; That no government ought to ſubſiſt any longer, than it continues to be of equal advantage to the governed as to the governors. If this propoſition is adopted, and by advantage wealth and power are to be underſtood, there is an end of all government

at once; for the greateſt ſhare of theſe muſt be poſſeſſed by the governors; becauſe without it they could not govern: power and property always accompany each other, and power is government; theſe therefore muſt reſide with thoſe who govern; and, how often ſoever theſe may change hands, and the condition of individuals be altered, with regard to the community, the caſe muſt eternally be the ſame: on this principle, therefore, the governed would have a perpetual right to reſiſt, and every government ought to be diſſolved at the moment of its commencement: on this principle, the loweſt of the people, in every country, may at any time be incited to rebel, and their rebellion

be

be juſtified; for, while they feel themſelves oppreſſed with poverty, and condemned to labour, and behold their ſuperiors enjoying all the pomps and luxuries of life, it will be eaſy to perſuade them, that they receive greater benefits from government than themſelves, and that, for that reaſon, they have a right to ſubvert it: this right they are always ready to aſſert, and will not ſo eaſily be diſſuaded from the attempt, by being told, what is certainly true, that they really receive as much benefit from government as thoſe who govern; becauſe, by that alone, they are every day prevented from tearing one another to pieces: but this argument will have but little weight, becauſe they will

never be convinced, that this is any benefit, and not rather an infringement of their natural rights.

In ſhort, all theſe wild and extravagant principles are the production of ignorance, or ambition, invented and propagated either by thoſe who are unacquainted with human nature, and human government, or thoſe who endeavour to render it impracticable in the hands of others, that it may fall into their own; and all terminate in one abſurd concluſion, which is, That government is an unjuſtifiable impoſition, and violation of the rights of nature, and ought to be eradicated from the face of the earth. But, happily for the world, whenever men preſume to reaſon againſt

the

the courſe of nature, and the decrees of Providence, their arguments, however ingenious, have but little effect; for government there muſt be, ſo long as there are men, and the diſpute will ſtill continue to be, that only of who ſhall govern.

It is an old and a juſt obſervation, that the loudeſt advocates for liberty have always been the greateſt tyrants whenever they have got power into their hands; and this muſt neceſſarily be; becauſe a love of liberty is an impatience of controul, and, when this impatience of controul is united with power, reſiſtance is an infringement of their liberty who poſſeſs it, and is treated by them with ſeverity, in proportion

tion to their impatience of controul; and thus the ſame diſpoſition, which in a ſubject conſtitutes a patriot, in a prince creates a tyrant. This ſhews, that an extraordinary zeal for liberty is nothing more than an extraordinary fondneſs for power, that is, a power to controul the actions of others, uncontrouled ourſelves; and this love of liberty does not ariſe ſo much from our fears of being ill-governed, as from our diſlike of being governed at all. So true is this, that I am fully perſuaded, that if an angel was ſent from heaven, veſted with irreſiſtible power, to govern any country upon earth, and was to execute his commiſſion with the utmoſt degree of wiſdom, juſtice, and bene-

volence, his dominions would very ſoon be deſerted by moſt of the inhabitants; who would rather chuſe to ſuffer mutual injuries and oppreſſions, however grievous, under any government in which they themſelves had a ſhare, than to be compelled to be virtuous and happy by any ſuperior authority whatever.

The uſual fallacy of which democratic writers avail themſelves, is this—they conſtantly charge all the numerous evils inherent in all human governments to the account of the governors; which for the moſt part are imputable with more propriety to the governed: it is owing to their vices that there is any ſuch thing as government, or any occaſion

occaſion for it; and conſequently all it's attendant evils muſt be derived from the ſame ſource. It is their crimes, which require puniſhment, and their venality which makes corruption neceſſary; war, with all its horrors, ſprings from their depravity, the violence of faction, the avarice of commerce, the ambition of the rich, and the profligacy and idleneſs of the poor: princes are made tyrants by the perverſeneſs and diſobedience of their ſubjects, and ſubjects become ſlaves from their incapacity to enjoy liberty. Every governor is in the ſituation of a gaoler, whoſe very office ariſes from the criminality of thoſe over whom he preſides; theſe ſometimes ſuffer much from the abuſe of his

power; but they would ſuffer more from their mutual ill-uſage, if unreſtrained by his ſuperintendant authority. A vicious and corrupt people can never be free, becauſe they are obliged to take ſhelter under deſpotiſm, which alone can defend them from the oppreſſions and injuries which they would every hour inflict upon each other; and a virtuous people will never be ſlaves, becauſe they ſtand in need of no ſuch defence.

We cannot fall into a more common, or more pernicious error, than to imagine, that, becauſe liberty is our ſupreme bleſſing, we, for that reaſon, can never have too much: if this was true, government would indeed be a grievance, and ought

every

every where to be aboliſhed; but the bleſſings of liberty, like all others beſtowed upon mankind, are circumſcribed within certain bounds, and become misfortunes by exceſs: dominion is not allotted to the few, for their own, but for the benefit of the many over whom they rule, and no greater degree of power ſhould ever be truſted in the hands of man, than is requiſite for that end; but to ſo much every community muſt ſubmit for it's own preſervation; and this is the only ſtandard by which a juſt proportion of liberty can be aſcertained. Every nation is by no means happy in proportion to the degree of freedom which it enjoys, but, as that degree is adapted to the cir-

cumſtances and the diſpoſitions of the people; and with them muſt frequently change. The ſame degree of power, which happily governs a ſmall, induſtrious, virtuous, and frugal ſtate, is totally unable to reſtrain the avarice, ambition, and faction of an extenſive, rich, and luxurious empire: as the ſtill and cryſtal lake is quietly bounded by the flowery banks which ſurround it; whilſt the turbulent and tempeſtuous ocean can be confined only by tremendous rocks and aſpiring mountains. The greateſt degree of liberty, which any people can enjoy, is, to be governed by equitable and impartial laws; but theſe cannot be adminiſtered, but either by their voluntary ſubmiſſion, or

by

by ſuperior force; if the firſt is refuſed, the latter muſt be exerted, and then liberty ſubſiſts no more: and hence it is evident, that thoſe who will not be contented with the greateſt degree of this invaluable bleſſing, muſt quickly find themſelves deprived of the leaſt; and that every people, who, from falſe and impracticable notions of liberty, refuſe to ſubmit to any government of their own, muſt very ſoon, from the conſtitution of human nature, be obliged to receive it under the yoke of ſome foreign power, which is wiſer, and therefore ſtronger, than themſelves.

DISQUISITION VIII.

ON RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

THE zealous advocates for religious liberty, frequently attack us with this triumphant queſtion, What has government to do with men's religion? to which I anſwer, Nothing; provided men's religion had nothing to do with government: but our religious and political opinions and intereſts are ſo intimately connected, and ſo blended together, that it is impoſſible to divide them. Were religious controverſies relative to ſpeculative doctrines

doctrines only, government would have neither right or inclination to interfere in them; but ſuch are by no means the objects of contention: theſe doctrines, believed by few, and underſtood by fewer, are nothing more than the ſignals of parties ſtruggling for ſuperiority, not for truth; for, as in civil conteſts men perſecute each other for wearing ribands of different colours, ſo do they in religious, for profeſſing different opinions; not that they have any objections to the ribands, or the opinions, but becauſe both are the marks by which thoſe are diſtinguiſhed who are adverſe to their purſuits. Proteſtants never inſtitute ſevere penal laws againſt Papiſts becauſe they believe tranſubſtantiation,

tion, (for why ſhould they not believe it, if they can?) but, becauſe the profeſſion of that doctrine is the teſt, by which thoſe are known to be members of a church which would infringe their liberties, and devour a great part of their property; on the other hand, the Church of Rome does not perſecute Proteſtants becauſe they cannot aſſent to this doctrine, but, becauſe the diſavowal of it is the ſignal that they are deſirous to pull down that fabric of wealth and power, which they have erected for themſelves, and are unwilling to part with: opinions are held forth as marks of diſtinction, but ambition and intereſt are the real cauſes of the diſpute.

It will perhaps be ſaid, that, notwithſtanding this may be true, there are many, very many pious and honeſt perſons, who, on the ſtricteſt examination, and cleareſt conviction, have adopted opinions on religious ſubjects, of which they are laudably tenacious, and cannot relinquiſh without violating both their reaſon and their conſcience; and that of theſe, for which they are accountable to God alone, no government can have a right to take cognizance, much leſs to controul. To all this I readily agree, ſo long as they continue to be opinions only; but whenever they ſhoot up into actions, which is their natural proceſs, they then come within the line of human juriſdiction,

tion, and government is obliged to take notice of them, not from choice, but from neceſſity, and ſelf-preſervation: for every religious ſect holds principles more or leſs productive of arbitrary power, liberty, or anarchy, which muſt neceſſarily affect the civil conſtitutions under which they are profeſſed; as they are the moſt dangerous, as well as the moſt common combuſtibles, which knavery employs to ſet folly and ignorance in a flame, whenever it may be ſubſervient to her intereſt. All religious ſects, however they may differ in other points, agree in one, which is the purſuit of power, and this by the ſame progreſſive ſteps—by firſt imploring toleration, next claiming equality, and

and then ſtruggling for ſuperiority over all the reſt. Government cannot remain an unconcerned ſpectator of theſe contentions, in which her own exiſtence is at ſtake, but muſt ſtretch out a pacific hand to compoſe them: this ſhe can effect by no other method, than by taking one, which ſhe moſt approves, under her protection, maintaining it's miniſters, and forming her public worſhip agreeable to it's doctrines; that is, in other words, by an eſtabliſhment: and thus we ſee, that ſome religious eſtabliſhment muſt neceſſarily make a part of every national conſtitution; which neceſſity proceeds not from any natural connection between religion and government,

but, becauſe the artifice, ignorance, and ſuperſtition of mankind never fails to unite them: and hence, I apprehend, ariſes that alliance between church and ſtate, which has been ſo much diſcuſſed, and ſo little underſtood.

The eſtabliſhment of one religion ought always to be accompanied by an unlimited toleration of all others, on the principles of both juſtice and policy; of juſtice, becauſe, although every government has a right to beſtow her protection and emoluments on any mode of religion which ſhe moſt approves, ſhe can have no right to enforce the belief or exerciſe of that, or to prohibit the profeſſion of any other, by compulſive penalties; of policy,

becauſe ſuch a toleration is the moſt effectual means of putting an end to all religious diſſenſions, which ſpringing, for the moſt part, from a love of ſingularity and contradiction, thrive under perſecution, and, when they ceaſe to be oppoſed, they ceaſe to exiſt.

If ſome eſtabliſhment is thus neceſſary, ſo muſt be ſome teſts, or ſubſcriptions, by which the friends of this eſtabliſhment may be diſtinguiſhed, and the principles of thoſe who are admitted into it aſcertained; without which it would be no eſtabliſhment at all: but every wiſe government will take care to make theſe as comprehenſive as the nature of their inſtitutions will admit, in order to leſſen the number of her

enemies;

enemies; for moſt aſſuredly ſuch will all be who are excluded. Whoever are enemies to the religious conſtitution of any country, whatever they may pretend, can never be friends to it's civil; for it is impoſſible that an honeſt man, who believes his own religious profeſſion to be true, and moſt acceptable to his Creator, ſhould ever be cordially attached to a conſtitution which diſcourages the exerciſe of it, and patronizes another, which appears to him to be falſe and impious. Extend this comprehenſion as widely as poſſible, it will exclude many pious and worthy perſons, who are tenacious of different principles; and narrow it to any degree, it will ſtill admit all thoſe who have none:

none: nor is it inexpedient that they ſhould be admitted; for every ſtate has a right to avail itſelf of their aſſiſtance, who, though they are not ſo good men, may be better ſubjects; as theſe may be induced by intereſt to ſupport the conſtitution of their country, while thoſe are compelled by principle to ſubvert it.

Thoſe who will not conform to any Chriſtian eſtabliſhment, give theſe reaſons for their diſſent;—that the religion ſo eſtabliſhed is imperfect, corrupted, and diſſimilar to the genuine purity of that holy inſtitution; and that they are in duty bound to reject ſuch a religion, and to ſearch for another, which appears to them to be more perfect

and pure. The firſt of theſe reaſons is unhappily true, but no apology for their conduct; the latter, intirely a miſtake, and therefore ought not to be regarded.

Firſt then, the charge of imperfection and corruption may be made good againſt any eſtabliſhed religion that ever exiſted. It muſt be liable to many imperfections from it's own nature, and the nature of man; in it's original inſtitution, it muſt lean to the errors and prejudices of the times; and, how much ſoever it is then approved, it cannot long preſerve that approbation, becauſe, human ſcience being continually fluctuating, mankind grow more or leſs knowing in every generation, and conſequently muſt

change

change their opinions on religious, as well as on all other ſubjects; ſo that, however wiſely any eſtabliſhed ſyſtem may be formed at firſt, it muſt, from the natural increaſe or decreaſe of human knowledge, be found or thought to be erroneous in the courſe of a few years: and yet the change of national religions cannot keep pace with the alterations of national opinions, becauſe ſuch frequent reviews and reformations would totally unhinge men's principles, and ſubvert the foundations of all religion and morality whatever. It muſt likewiſe be corrupted by the very eſtabliſhment which protects it, becauſe by that it will be mixed with the worldly purſuits of it's degenerate votaries; and it

muſt be extremely diſſimilar to it's original purity, or it would be incapable of being eſtabliſhed; for pure and genuine Chriſtianity never was, nor ever can be the national religion of any country upon earth. It is a gold too refined to be worked up with any human inſtitution, without a large portion of alloy; for, no ſooner is this ſmall grain of muſtard-ſeed watered with the fertile ſhowers of civil emoluments, than it grows up into a large and ſpreading tree, under the ſhelter of whoſe branches the birds of prey and plunder will not fail to make for themſelves comfortable habitations, and thence deface it's beauty, and deſtroy it's fruits.

Theſe

Theſe imputations on religious eſtabliſhments are certainly juſt, but no reaſons for diſſenſions, becauſe the inference which makes the latter propoſition is intirely a miſtake; for no man can be bound in duty to deſert a national religion, on account of defects congenial to it's nature, nor to ſearch for perfection, which is no where to be found. Some religious eſtabliſhment is abſolutely neceſſary to the exiſtence of every ſtate; but it is not neceſſary that this ſhould be perfect, and free from all errors and corruption, nor even that it ſhould be ſo eſteemed by thoſe who conform to it: it is ſufficiently perfect for this purpoſe, if it contains nothing repugnant to the principles of

ſound morality, and the doctrines of Chriſt. The maſs of the people in every country, being incapable of making any accurate inquiry into religious ſubjects, muſt have a religion ready made, or none at all; and in this, thoſe of ſuperior abilities may conſcientiouſly join, without impeding their further reſearches into the diſpenſations of Providence, and the duties of man. Great and numerous muſt be the inconveniences of any religious eſtabliſhment in the hands of men; but what would be the condition of any nation in which there was none? No uniform mode of public worſhip could there be adopted; no edifices built or repaired for the celebration of it, nor miniſters maintained to perform

perform it, except at the will of an ignorant and diſcordant multitude, the majority of whom would chuſe rather to have neither worſhip, churches, or miniſters, than to incur the expences which muſt attend them. Every man, who had any ſenſe of religion, would make one for himſelf; from whence innumerable ſects would ſpring up, each of which would chuſe a miniſter for themſelves; who, being dependent for ſubſiſtence on the voluntary and precarious liberality of his congregation, muſt indulge their humours, ſubmit to their paſſions, participate of their vices, and learn of them what doctrines they would chuſe to be taught; and conſequently none but the moſt ignorant and

illiterate would undertake ſo mean and beggarly an employment. A people thus left to the dominion of their own imaginations and paſſions, and the inſtructions of ſuch teachers, would ſplit into as many ſects and parties, diviſions and ſubdiviſions, as knavery and folly, artifice, abſurdity, and enthuſiaſm, can produce; each of which would be attacked with violence, and ſupported with obſtinacy by all the reſt. This evidently demonſtrates, that ſome religious eſtabliſhment muſt be annexed to every civil government; the members of which are ſo far from being bound in duty to deſert it, becauſe it falls ſhort of their ideas of purity and perfection, that they are obliged by all the ties of

benevolence and ſociety to conform to and ſupport it, unleſs it requires any conceſſions poſitively criminal.

Should it ſtill be inſiſted on, that every man is obliged to profeſs and exerciſe that religion which appears to him moſt conſonant to reaſon, and moſt acceptable to God, with which no government can have a right to meddle, or power to controul; in anſwer I ſhall only ſay, that all this is undoubtedly a miſtake, which ariſes from applying propoſitions to men, as members of national communities, which are applicable to them only as individuals. Mankind, ſo long as they reſide on this terreſtrial globe, ought always to be conſidered in a two-fold capacity; as individuals,

and

and as members of ſociety; that is, as men, and as citizens: in which different ſituations, ſo different are their relations and duties, that there is ſcarce a propoſition which we can affirm of them with truth in one, which is not falſe if applied to them in the other. It is by this miſapplication that the zealous advocates for unbounded liberty, civil and religious, deceive their followers, and ſometimes themſelves, and draw concluſions equally deſtructive of all government and religion. Thus, for inſtance, they aſſert that all men are by nature free, equal, and independent: this, when applied to men as a general ſpecies, is true; they then apply this aſſertion to men who are members of civil

communities,

communities, to whom ſubordination is neceſſary, and obedience to their ſuperiors an indiſpenſable duty, and therefore in regard to whom it is abſolutely falſe; and yet from hence they endeavour to prove, that government is an infringement of the natural rights of mankind. In like manner they affirm, that every man is obliged to make choice of that religion, and to adhere to that mode of worſhip, which appear to his judgment to be the pureſt, and moſt acceptable to his Creator: this propoſition, likewiſe, with regard to men conſidered as individuals, is true; but this again they apply to members of national communities, and eſtabliſhed churches: with regard to whom it is not true; for, as

ſuch, they are bound in duty to profeſs that religion, and practice that mode of worſhip, which the laws of that community enjoin, provided they find nothing in them poſitively evil: yet from hence they would perſuade us, that every individual has a right to deſert, or even to oppoſe, the eſtabliſhed religion of his country, whenever he finds, or fancies he can find a better. Thus are their unwary admirers deceived: the truth of theſe propoſitions they cannot deny, and have not perhaps ſagacity ſufficient to diſcover their miſapplication.

It is remarkable, that Chriſtianity conſtantly addreſſes us as men, never as citizens; the only duty it requires of us under that character, is ſubmiſſion

miſſion to power in general, but preſcribes no rules for our political conduct: all thoſe divine precepts of patience, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, non-reſiſtance of evil, contempt of the world, and indifference to the things of it, are given us as individuals, but not as members of national communities; becauſe in that character they would have been impracticable: for no ſtate can adminiſter her internal policy, and much leſs regulate her conduct with regard to foreign powers, in conformity to theſe commands; becauſe the imperfections, the paſſions, and the vices of mankind will not permit it. Any one as an individual may pay obedience to them; to thoſe who have little to do with

the buſy occupations of the world, it is an eaſy and a pleaſing taſk; for thoſe who are deeply and earneſtly engaged in the moſt innocent of them, it is extremely difficult; but for thoſe who are employed in the great concerns of political communities, in carrying on war, negotiating peace, and managing the intrigues of contending factions, it is abſolutely impracticable. This I take to be the cauſe of thoſe frequent declarations from the Author of this religion, that neither himſelf nor his doctrines are of this world; but adverſe to all it's purſuits: and this perhaps may be the reaſon of that aſſertion, that it is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into

into the kingdom of God; becauſe, rich men being uſually moſt engaged in theſe purſuits, moſt attached to the world, and moſt involved in the buſineſs of it, the extreme difficulty of their admiſſion is thus forcibly expreſſed: or, if by a rich man, is here meant a great man, that is, a conqueror, a hero, or a ſtateſman, this declaration may perhaps be literally true; and that it ſhould in this place be ſo underſtood, ſeems no improbable conjecture, as a rich man, and a great man, in moſt languages are ſynonymous terms. The firſt Chriſtians ſaw their religion in this light, and refuſed to have any concern with government, unleſs to obey it; they inquired not into the rights of thoſe who ruled, nor their

own to liberty, and wiſhed for nothing, but to paſs thro' this life unincumbered with it's buſineſs, and well prepared for a better: ſo long as they were a ſmall ſect, diſſenting from the religions of the countries in which they lived, this inoffenſive conduct was eaſily preſerved; but, when princes and nobles adopted their religion, and by ſuch illuſtrious examples it became almoſt univerſal, theſe principles of inactivity were no longer tenable, without the total diſſolution of all government; for, if no man would govern, there could be none: neceſſity therefore obliged them to take a part; a part ſoon awakened ambition, and love of power, thoſe paſſions ſo natural to the human heart, and induced them

to

to ſeize the whole; Chriſtianity was eſtabliſhed, in conſequence corrupted, and little more of it remained, except the name.

To this opinion of the incompatibility of Chriſtianity with the occupations and cuſtoms of the world, were all thoſe numerous monaſtic inſtitutions, which every where accompanied it's progreſs, indebted for their origin; inſtitutions certainly favourable to the genuine ſpirit of that religion, but, like the religion itſelf, ſo adverſe to the nature of man, that they can never be made fit for general uſe: could they have been confined to thoſe few, who are capable of employing ſolitude in devotion and religious contemplation, they would undoubtedly have

been conducive to the practice of every Chriſtian virtue; but, as all were indiſcriminately admitted, who pretended to ſanctity, or who miſtook enthuſiaſm for piety, and a quarrel with the world for the love of God, they could not fail very ſoon to become nothing better than retreats for lazineſs, and ſeminaries of ſuperſtition and vice: yet, notwithſtanding all their abuſes, I am inclined to think there are ſtill within their walls ſome few inſtances of patience and reſignation, devotion and charity, carried to a higher degree of perfection than they are or can be in any other ſituation, in which the faſhions, the pleaſures, and buſineſs of life, and the corruptions of national eſtabliſhments,

bliſhments, muſt more or leſs obſtruct their progreſs; where our virtue muſt be endangered by continual temptations, our meditations diverted from celeſtial objects by worldly purſuits; our devotions interrupted by amuſements and impertinence; and that ſerene chearfulneſs and happy complacency, ſo eſſential to the Chriſtian profeſſion, muſt frequently be diſturbed by injuries and diſappointments. The voluntary hardſhips which many of theſe recluſes impoſed upon themſelves, were probably derived from a miſtaken notion, that ſuffering was an eſſential part of their religion; a notion which they had perhaps contracted from that conſtant connection between them,

which they had ſo long obſerved and felt during their perſecutions, and were not able ſuddenly to abandon, in happier and more indulgent times.

But why then eſtabliſh a religion, which is ſo improper for the purpoſe? Becauſe it is leſs improper than any other. The eſtabliſhment of ſome religion is neceſſary to the exiſtence of every ſtate, and it is as neceſſary that this ſhould be, or be thought, a revelation from God. Mere Deiſm never was, or can be, the eſtabliſhed religion of any country; for, as all it's principles muſt be derived from the reaſon of ſome, they will always be controverted by the reaſon of others, and can therefore

never obtain a general acquieſcence. The philoſopher, by learned inveſtigations, and the force of his own underſtanding, may be convinced of the great truths of natural religion; but, without the ſanction of ſupernatural authority, he will never be able to convince others, who will neither believe his doctrines, or obey his precepts. If Chriſtianity, therefore, is not adopted, ſome fabulous ſyſtem muſt ſupply it's place; and, if ſome eſtabliſhed religion there muſt be, it is ſurely more eligible to make a true than a fictitious revelation the baſis of it. Nor will any one, I ſuppoſe, aſſert, that it would be preferable to eſtabliſh Paganiſm or Mahometiſm, and lay Chriſtianity by for private uſe;

uſe; which, disfigured as it is by worldly connections, is ſtill ſuperior to all other inſtitutions. As members therefore of political communities, we are bound to accept it with all it's imperfections; tho', as individuals, we ought always to approach as near to it's original purity, as our own imperfections will permit.

FINIS.

AN

ANSWER

TO THE

DISQUISITION

ON

GOVERNMENT and CIVIL LIBERTY, &c.

AN

ANSWER

TO THE

DISQUISITION

ON

GOVERNMENT and CIVIL LIBERTY;

IN A

LETTER

TO THE AUTHOR OF

DISQUISITIONS

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

LONDON:

Printed for J. DEBRETT, (Succeſſor to Mr. Almon,)
oppoſite Burlington-Houſe in Piccadilly.

MDCCLXXXII.

ANSWER, &c.

SIR,

I Yeſterday read your Diſquiſitions on ſeveral Subjects: I paſs over them all without animadverſion, except the ſeventh, which you have entitled — on government and civil liberty — nor would this have attracted my notice, but from its tendency to diſſeminate principles *abſurd*, *falſe*, *miſchievous*, *as inconſiſtent with common-ſenſe as with all human ſociety*. If you think theſe are hard terms, you muſt be

content to ſubmit to them; they are not of my coinage; they bear the ſtamp of your own authority, for they are the very terms you have thought proper to beſtow on thoſe who differ from you in opinion.

I make no queſtion of your ſincerity in what you write, nor do I queſtion your ability, but you have given every body great occaſion to queſtion your modeſty and good manners; the principles of Locke and Lord Somers, of Hooker, and of Puffendorf, to ſay nothing of living authors, as honeſt and as intelligent, probably, as yourſelf, deſerved to be treated with reſpect; harſh language is a diſgrace to a good cauſe, and the worſt cannot

ſupport

ſupport a bad one: I will endeavour not to imitate your example.

You have undertaken to ſubvert the principles of Mr. Locke and his diſciples by ridicule and by reaſon; your ridicule is miſplaced, and your reaſoning is inconcluſive; Your ridicule is miſplaced, for the ſubject is of great importance; whether your reaſoning be inconcluſive or not, let the public judge.

You have reduced your adverſaries principles of government to the five following propoſitions:

I. That all men are born equal.

II. That all men are born free.

III. That all government is derived from the people.

 IV. That

IV. That all government is a compact between the governors and the governed.

V. That no government ought to laſt any longer than it continues to be of equal advantage to the two contracting parties; that is, to the governed, as to the governors.

I acknowledge that moſt of theſe propoſitions are fairly and perſpicuouſly ſtated; and I hope to ſhew that you have no other merit in treating them.

That all men are born equal. — This is the firſt propoſition which you are determined to demoliſh; but you do not ſeem to me, from the nature of your attack, to comprehend

hend its meaning; if you cannot admit its truth, except upon the poor quibble of all men being equally born, you had better deny it altogether. You ſpeak of the different ſituations in which men are born with reſpect to beauty, health, wiſdom, genius, fortunes, and honours, and profeſs that you cannot underſtand how they can be ſaid to be born equal; — nor was there ever a man of common ſenſe who could underſtand it; nor can you produce a ſingle author of any credit, or of no credit, from Ariſtotle to the newſpaper politicians of the preſent times, who ever contended that men were born to this kind of equality. No, Sir, the ſtate of equality we ſpeak of is quite a different

ferent thing; it is that ſtate "wherein all power and juriſdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another," it reſpects that freedom from ſubordination, which, antecedent to civil compact, belongs to every individual of our ſpecies, who is arrived at years of diſcretion; it has not the moſt diſtant relation to one man's being two feet taller, or twice as ſtrong as another; the tall man may overlook the little man, but he has not thereby acquired the right of prohibiting him the uſe of his eyes; the ſtrong man may overcome the weak one in a ſingle combat, but that gives him no right to commence it; he can have no right to kick and cuff his fellow, becauſe he may be able to do it with impunity.

Power,

Power, wealth, and wiſdom may be the means of introducing a ſubordination amongſt mankind, but this ſubordination muſt be *voluntary* on one ſide, or it will be nothing but *unjuſt force*, *rank tyranny*, on the other. You are born a duke, marquis, earl, viſcount, baron, or what is more deſpotic than all theſe put together, a tory country gentleman; you have power enough to do a peaſant, or a mechanic, any poor plebeian, an injury; — but did your birth, when it gave you the power, give you alſo the right of doing it. You are born to wealth; thank your anceſtors for your good fortune, but do not think that it entitles you to domineer over him who was born to none. You are poſſeſſed of a great natural genius, your brain has been caſt

caſt in a better mould than that of your neighbour; thank God for your intellectual pre-eminence; uſe your wiſdom for your own benefit and the good of others; but leave them to be judges of that good; they may have no reliſh for the good which your wiſdom may point out; you can be no judge of their feelings, can have no right to compel them to be wiſe in your way, againſt their will.

But this natural freedom from ſubordination, and that is the equality contended for, is ſo clear that no more need be ſaid on the ſubject, and you yourſelf ſeem to admit it, when you aſk, —. " but, ſuppoſing they were all born equal, would this prove what is always intended

tended to be proved by it, that they ought always to continue ſo?" — Intended! by whom? I never yet ſaw a writer on the ſubject who had any intention of the kind. You again miſtake, I will not ſay miſrepreſent, for that implies a principle of which I hope you are incapable; but you miſtake the meaning of your opponents, and diſplay your valour in fighting a phantom of your own forming. Who has ever ſaid that men, becauſe they were born equal, *ought*, were under an obligation, to continue equal? Becauſe we do not grant that any man has a *natural* right to rule over another, muſt we of neceſſity grant that he cannot have an adventitious one? You have no right to rule me,

nor have I any right to rule you; we are at this inſtant in a ſtate of equality with reſpect to each other, the next may introduce a ſtate of ſubordination; for my own advantage I make an agreement with you, for a ſum of money, or other conſideration, I give you a right to diſpoſe of my time and labour; I am no longer your equal, but it was my own voluntary act which made me your inferior. Men are born equal; for their own advantage, for the ſake of enjoying peace and protection, they elect a magiſtrate; they are no longer his equals, but it was their own voluntary act which made them his inferiors; and they *ought*, (if that be the meaning of your *ought*) they

ought

ought to be permitted to continue equal till they have conſtituted to themſelves a ſuperior. — You triumphantly aſk, "muſt no man *aſſume* power over another becauſe they were born equal?" I plainly tell you, no — he muſt not; — if he does, he *aſſumes* what he has no right to: God has not given him the right, man cannot give it him; nor can he acquire it by any other means than the conceſſion of him over whom it is to be exerted. This conceſſion is the only firm and true principle of civil ſubordination; it will laſt, and bow down a man's neck to the *voluntary* yoke of legal government, when the ſtruggles to ſhake off an *involuntary* bondage, ſhall burſt into a thouſand

pieces the chains of deſpotiſm. Thus may you ſee that this mighty argument, drawn from the equality of mankind, by which all powers and principalities are eſtabliſhad on their ſureſt baſes, is entirely true, and cannot be too often or too ſolemnly introduced, eſpecially when "*many abſurd principles concerning government* and ſlavery, *have of late been diſſeminated with unuſual induſtry.*"

That all men are born free — is the ſecond propoſition which offends you. I think the proof of this is included in that of the former: For, if all men are born equal to each other, with reſpect to their want of power over each other, they certainly muſt be equally free:

where

where there is no *natural* ſubordination, there can be no *natural* government, for government of every kind implies ſubordination, and where there is no natural government there is natural freedom. In your endeavours to refute this propoſition, you have not, indeed, trifled with Sir Robert Filmer, by attempting to prove that men are not born naturally free, from children being born in ſubjection to their parents, or in deriving royal deſpotic authority from the paternal authority of Adam, you have not plagued your readers with this ſolemn nonſenſe; but you certainly do trifle with their patience, in proving the little claim man can have to freedom, from his being confined

in

in the womb, ſwathed by his nurſe, flogged by his ſchoolmaſter, or hanged by his magiſtrate. All this is humour, but it is not argument: it is wit, but without judgment: I cannot employ my time in refuting it. — You grow ſerious, and repreſent a factious and turbulent diſpoſition, and an impatience of controul, as diſqualifying a man from being a member of a future celeſtial community. — So, then, the affair is quite over with us, both here and hereafter: The Tories only are to go to heaven: they have long ſhut the door of St. James in the face of the Whigs, and they think that St. Peter will be their porter, and perform the ſame ſervice for them in an higher place. Sad reaſoning this!

this! Is every man who raiſes a tumult, to tumble from his throne a tyrant or an uſurper unfit for heaven? Is every man who groans when he is oppreſſed, or kicks when he is unjuſtly goaded, turbulent and unfit for heaven? Is an impatience of controul, which may neither be directed by wiſdom, nor prompted by goodneſs, nor founded in juſtice, to be proſcribed as unfit for the communion of the bleſſed? On this ſuppoſition what muſt become of St. Paul and the apoſtles, and all the Chriſtian martyrs? they were men of turbulent diſpoſitions, for they turned the world upſide down! Be a little charitable, I beſeech you, and do not ſo haſtily conſign to the company of the devil and his angels,

gels, thoſe *factious* men, lords ſpiritual and temporal, knights and citizens, gentlemen and yeomen, who were *impatient of the controul* of James the Second, and who by that very impatience have ſeated the Houſe of *Hanover* on the throne of *Great-Britain*.

That all government is derived from the people — is the third propoſition, which you take upon you to pronounce to be entirely falſe. I do not ſee that you bring any proof of what you aſſert, or refer us to any other origin of government. All government, you ſay, is power, with which ſome are *intruſted* to controul the actions of others. — Agreed — but tell us by whom they are intruſted with this

power. Truſt is a relative term; it implies at leaſt two perſons, him who truſts, as well as him who is truſted; the governors you ſay are the perſons intruſted, but you do not mention the perſons who intruſt. We ſay, the people are the perſons who intruſt; this you deny, but you do not ſubſtitute any other perſon in the place of the people. Perhaps, in your language, the governors *aſſumed* this truſt, that is, they took it by force or by fraud; had they aſſumed your horſe or your coat in the ſame way, I verily believe you would have ſaid, they ought to have been hanged for their aſſumption; and yet, an aſſumption of power over your liberty and life is of more conſe-

quence to your felicity and well-being, than a thouſand coats or horſes. Perhaps they aſſumed it by divine appointment; let them produce their title to it, and ſhew us, that God has conveyed by a deed of truſt the lives and fortunes of millions of his creatures to be diſpoſed of by the arbitrary wills of any of the ſons of Adam: It is lucky for the defenders of this doctrine, that *Sir Robert Filmer's Patriarcha* has not yet been thrown into the flames by the common hangman. God, we acknowledge it with thankfulneſs and humility, has an unlimited right over us; he has formed us with capacities for happineſs which cannot be fully attained without ſociety, and ſociety

cannot ſubſiſt without ſome being intruſted with power to controul the actions of others; in this way government, as well as every other conſtitution of nature, may be truly ſaid to be the appointment of God; but what has this to do with the form of any particular government, with the degree of truſt, the extent of the controul neceſſary for the exiſtence of government? theſe we know are infinitely various in different countries; and we contend, that in all *juſt* governments, the people have delegated to their governors the particular degree of truſt with which they are inveſted, have limited the extent of the controul to which they are to be ſubjected. This truth forces itſelf upon your own mind, its

power is great, you cannot reſiſt it; you acknowledge in its full extent all that the warmeſt of your opponents ever contended for; and you acknowledge it in the very place where you are reaſoning againſt it. In one page you ſay, that "the inference uſually drawn from this propoſition (that all government is derived from the people) is utterly falſe; which is, that, becauſe all government is derived from the people, the people have a right to reſume it, and adminiſter it themſelves whenever they pleaſe." In the oppoſite page you acknowledge, "that the people in every country have a right to reſiſt manifeſt grievances and oppreſſions, to *change* their governors, and even their conſtitu-

ſtitution, on great and extraordinary occaſions." Now what does this amount to, but a right to reſume and adminiſter the government as they ſhall ſee fit, and whenever they are *pleaſed* to think the occaſion great and extraordinary? for if they are pleaſed to think it ſo, it is ſo in effect; their thinking it ſo does not make it ſo, but the conſequence muſt be the ſame as if it was ſo; the governed may be in an error in thinking any particular occaſion great and extraordinary, or the governors may be in an error in thinking it not ſo; but there being no judge on earth to decide which is in the right, the actions of both ſides muſt be the ſame as if both were in the right. Thus you acknow-

knowledge, with the moſt zealous Lockian amongſt us, the abſtract right of the people; as to the practicability of exerciſing it, that is quite another queſtion, in the deciſion of which a great many circumſtances may ariſe, which cannot be foreſeen in ſpeculation or generally eſtimated; it was exerciſed at the Revolution; and we truſt that there will never, in this country, be occaſion to exerciſe it again; for we hope, and are perſuaded, that the wiſdom of the Houſe of Hanover will keep at an awful diſtance from the throne, men profeſſing principles which have levelled with the duſt the Houſe of Steuart.

You are very ſevere upon thoſe, whom you are pleaſed to call our modern

dern demagogues, becauſe they have not explained to your ſatisfaction what they mean by the terms "the people." You repreſent them, injuriouſly enough, as excluding from that denomination the peers of the realm, and the repreſentatives of the people, the paſtors of the church, and the ſages of the law, the magiſtrates, the land-holders, the ſtock-holders, and the merchants, as expecting public ſpirit from the garrets of Grub-ſtreet, reformation from the purlieus of St. Giles, a Solon from the tin-mines of Cornwall, and a Lycurgus from the coal-pits of Newcaſtle. This is mere declamation, if not ſomething worſe, defamation. I never heard, nor, I will take upon me to ſay, did you ever

ever hear any one of the demagogues you ſpeak of, annexing to the terms "the people," the ſenſe you have here repreſented them as annexing. Your imagination has in this, as in other parts of your Diſquiſition, run away with your good ſenſe; your deſcription is lively, but it is not juſt; you may have ſupported your point, but you will have ruined, with thinking men, the opinion they might have been diſpoſed to entertain of your candour. But that you may not be at a loſs to know what your modern demagogues underſtand by the people; I will tell you what the Prince of Orange underſtood by them, for that, I take it, is the ſenſe in which they underſtand the terms, and in which

every

every man of ſenſe muſt underſtand them. The Prince explains his ſentiment, in the 25th paragraph of his declaration, wherein he invites and requires *all perſons whatſoever*, (here is no excluſion even of tinners and colliers) all the peers of the realm, both ſpiritual and temporal, all lords, lieutenants, deputy-lieutenants, and all gentlemen, citizens, and other *commons of all ranks*, to come and aſſiſt him in the execution of his deſign, to re-eſtabliſh the conſtitution of the Engliſh government.

We come to the fourth propoſition, that all government is a compact between the governors and the governed.—You would have better expreſſed our meaning had

you put into your propoſition one little word more, and inſtead of all government, ſaid, all *juſt* government; for none of us are ſo ignorant as not to know the effects of conqueſt and violence, of circumvention and fraud, in the infringement or ſubverſion of natural rights.

You have the modeſty to ſtile all that has been written on this ſubject, by men of the moſt comprehenſive intellects, and the deepeſt penetration, "*a ridiculous fiction, intended* only to ſubvert all government, and let mankind looſe to prey upon each other." I do not believe that any one of thoſe, in any age or country, who have embraced the opinion in queſtion, ever

ever entertained the leaſt particle of that *intention* which you have, with ſo much liberality, and ſo little delicacy, attributed to them all. I can certainly, however, anſwer for one of the chief ſupporters of this doctrine, that he had no *intention* to ſubvert government. Hear his own words when he is ſpeaking of the papers which contained the beginning and end of his Treatiſe of Government; "Theſe (papers) which remain, I hope, are ſufficient to *eſtabliſh* the throne of our great reſtorer, our preſent king William; to make *good* his title in the *conſent* of the people; which, being the only one of all *lawful* governments, he has more fully and clearly than any prince in

Chriſtendom." I have ſo great an opinion of Mr. Locke's ſincerity, that I cannot believe he ſpeaks of a *ridiculous fiction*, when he derives the title of king William to the throne, from the conſent of the people, and prefers it to that of every other prince in Chriſtendom. I cannot believe that he *intended* to *ſubvert* all government, becauſe he ſays, he hoped not to ſubvert, but to *eſtabliſh* the throne of our great reſtorer. It would be eaſy to purſue this matter, and to ſhew that all the other diſtinguiſhed patrons of a ſocial compact had as little intention to let mankind looſe to prey upon each other as Mr. Locke had.

You

You call this compact a fiction; an hundred inſtances might be produced of its reality, both in the hiſtory of our own and other countries, and the coronation-oath ſtill ſubſiſts as a proof of it. But meaning to make this Anſwer as ſhort as poſſible, I will not take up your time on this head, but refer you to the eighth chapter of the ſecond book of Mr. Locke's Treatiſe on Government; and to a little book which has either never fallen into your hands, or you have forgotten its contents, and from the peruſal of which, you will ſee abundant reaſon to retract your haſty aſſertion, that a compact between the people and their rulers is a ridiculous fiction. This book

is intitled, The Judgment of whole Kingdoms and Nations, concerning the Rights, Power, and Prerogative of Kings, and the Rights, Privileges, and Properties of the People. This book is ſaid to be the work of Lord Somers; but whether it be ſo or not, I do not enquire; certain I am, that the learning and good reaſoning contained in it would have done honour to him, or any other man.

In treating this fourth propoſition, you ſeem not to comprehend its meaning; it is painful to me to make this remark;—on any other ſubject you would have reaſoned better; but this is a ſubject which requires deep and ſerious reflection, more than a brilliancy of fancy

fancy or expreſſion. "Compact, you ſay, is repugnant to the very nature of government, whoſe eſſence is compulſion." The eſſence of government, *after it is eſtabliſhed*, is compulſion; but the eſſence of the eſtabliſhment of government is compact, tacit, or expreſs. Theſe are quite different things; you will preſently underſtand the diſtinction. Suppoſe an hundred common ſailors to be ſhipwrecked upon an iſland inhabited by ſavages, it is evident that there is no manner of government amongſt theſe men; ſome may be taller, or ſtronger, or younger, or wiſer, than the reſt; but ſtill they are all equal to each other with reſpect to ſubordination; no one has any authority to regulate

regulate the actions of his fellow. For mutual preſervation they will ſoon wiſh to withdraw themſelves from this ſtate of equality, and, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, anarchy; they will elect a leader; the wiſeſt probably and the boldeſt man amongſt them, will, by their common ſuffrage, be made their governor; and, in order that this governor may be of uſe to them, they will promiſe to obey him whilſt he acts for the common good. Now begins compulſion, but it is compulſion ariſing from conſent and compact; it is in its exiſtence *ſubſequent* to the eſtabliſhment of that government of which it conſtitutes the eſſence.

You ſay, by way of invalidating the notion of compact, that "if every man had a right to ſurrender his independence on bargain, he muſt have an equal right to retain it." I admit that he has that right, but it is a right which his intereſt will not ſuffer him to retain for any length of time; or if he does retain it, it muſt be at his own peril. Suppoſe one of our hundred ſailors ſhould refuſe to elect any leader, that one is in a ſtate of natural independence with reſpect to all the reſt; the leader has no authority over him; he is at liberty to protect himſelf, by his own ſtrength, from the attacks of ſavages and wild beaſts; but a very few days experience would con-

vince him, that his protection would be better ſecured by an hundred arms than by one; he would ſoon be induced to become a member of that community into which the reſt had entered; he would be *induced* to it, but he ought not to be *compelled* to it.

You ſeem to apprehend that robberies, and murders, rapine and bloodſhed, would univerſally take place if this right of retaining their independence belonged to mankind; this is an idle fear. Men would not retain it, becauſe it would be for their intereſt to give it up; they would not retain it, becauſe, inſtead of their not being amenable to any human tribunal for their enormities, as you aſſert, they

they would be anſwerable for them to every man they met. Every man would have a right to kill a murderer, to apprehend a robber, and to inflict an adequate puniſhment upon every other violator of the law of nature. This right which, in the words of Mr. Locke, "every man hath to puniſh the offender, and to be the executioner of the law of nature," removes at once all the abſurdities you think your opponents have fallen into; and had you read often, and thoroughly digeſted, the writings of that great man, who ſtands unmoved as a rock of adamant amid the frothy ebullitions of cenſure which have of late been levelled at his principles,

you would neither have been ſo free in the uſe of ſuch unbecoming terms, as abſurdities, ridiculous fictions, extravagant principles, fallacious propoſitions, &c. nor have thereby ſet an example which the writer of this Letter diſdains to imitate, though you have afforded him abundant opportunity of doing it with ſucceſs.

That no government ought to ſubſiſt any longer than it continues to be of equal advantage to the governed as to the governors. — This is the laſt propoſition which has become the object of your animadverſion; it is not ſo clearly ſtated as the preceding ones; nor does your attempt to refute it, render it more intelligible; it

makes

makes a diſtinction where there ought to be no difference; it intimates that the advantage of a governor may be different from that of the governed, whereas they ought always to be the ſame; but ſhould the caſe happen to be otherwiſe, who can have any heſitation in ſaying, that the advantage of the governor will be as light as air, when weighed againſt that of the people; the *ſalus populi* is, and ought to be, the ſupreme law. Conſider the advantage which each of the contracting parties expects to enjoy. The people look for the protection of their perſons and properties, not only from foreign and domeſtic violence, but from the encroachments of the prince himſelf.

ſelf. The prince expects pre-eminence; it a may be a painful pre-eminence, but he deems it deſireable, and accepts it. Put the pre-eminence of the prince, and the means of ſuſtaining it, to become incompatible with the protection of the people and the common ſafety, and ſhew us, if you can, the nature of the chain which, in ſuch a circumſtance, will bind the people to their prince; it will be a chain unjuſtly formed, by the will of one, to gall the necks of millions. The ſtanding armies of France, or Spain, or Ruſſia, or Pruſſia, or Germany, or Turkey, may rivet it in their reſpective countries, but in all of them (for all theſe kinds of government are

the

the offsprings of force or fraud) according to your own moſt juſt, candid, and liberal conceſſion, "the people have an equal right to preſerve or regain their liberty whenever they are able." Whoſe principles now, think you, lay a foundation for ſedition, treaſon, tumult, rebellion, and ſubverſion of government? Thoſe of the man who aſſerts, that "all the governments we ſee (no exception, you perceive, for our own) are the offſprings of force or fraud, of accident, and the circumſtances of the times, and muſt perpetually change with thoſe circumſtances; that in all of them, the people have an equal right to preſerve or regain their liberty whenever they are able."

able;" or thoſe of him who contends, that the Houſe of Hanover reigns here by the conſent of the people, and that whilſt it maintains the conditions on which it was exalted to the throne inviolate, the compact ought to be perpetual.

You have not well explained the nature of the advantage which governors and the governed derive from the inſtituted relation which they bear to each other; it does not conſiſt in the poſſeſſing, or not poſſeſſing, wealth and power. The pooreſt man has ſome property; he has a perſon at leaſt which he wiſhes to protect from violence. It is the ſecurity of this little property, the protection of limb and life

life from pain and extinction, which conſtitute the advantage he hopes to obtain by entering into ſociety; he knows that wealth either deſcends from anceſtry, is flung into his lap by Fortune, or is to be acquired by induſtry; he expects that government will ſecure to him the poſſeſſion of what he can honeſtly get, but he is not wild enough to expect that it will put him in poſſeſſion of what does not belong to him. The principal advantage which the governor derives from his ſtation, is the conſciouſneſs of diſcharging his high truſt with fidelity. His power of executing, or even of ordaining laws, of making war or peace, of conferring honours or rewarding merit; theſe

and other apdendages of his high office, can be of no ſort of advantage to him as an individual, except ſo far as they are exerted in perfect coincidence with the advantage of the community, as they enable him to fulfil the greateſt of all human duties, the duty of the ſupreme magiſtrate to the people, over whom he preſides. In the diſcuſſion of this laſt queſtion I really expected, for the ſubject naturally led to it, that you would have taken a larger field, that you would have entered upon our Iriſh or American diſputes, and ſhewn that it was the duty of both theſe people to have ſuffered our government over them to ſubſiſt, when the advantages reſulting to them

the governed, and to us the governors, were no longer equal, or, which may be as true, were thought to be no longer equal: I expected that you would have cleared up a doubt which has occupied the minds of our beſt politicians, — whether men have a natural right, a civil right is nothing to the purpoſe, to withdraw themſelves from any civil community, when they are of opinion they can better ſecure to themſelves the advantages of civil ſociety elſewhere. Had you taken ſuch a route as this, you might probably have bewildered me in brakes and thickets; I might have loſt both ſight and ſcent of you; but as you have contented yourſelf with running on in the

beaten track; there is no need why upon this occaſion; I ſhould entangle myſelf in thorns and briers which lie out of my way.

Having done with the propoſitions, you come to general obſervations, and deſcend, I fear, from reaſoning to railing, for what other name will the world give to the following extract, — "In ſhort, all theſe wild and extravagant principles are the production of *ignorance* or *ambition*, invented and propagated, either by thoſe who are unacquainted with human nature and human government, or thoſe who endeavour to render it impracticable in the hands of others, that it may fall into their own." — I can hardly forbear the uſe of ſome of

of *your* appellations. — Conſider, Sir, what you have ſaid; — were all thoſe illuſtrious men, who by the moſt conſummate virtue, and at the hazard of every thing that was dear to them, accompliſhed the Revolution, *ignorant* or *ambitious?* Are the lords and commons of the preſent times, their number is not ſmall, who reſolutely maintain thoſe principles, *ignorant* or *ambitious?* Is there not one grain of public virtue, one ſpark of pure patriotiſm amongſt them? Are they diſtinguiſhed by nothing but *ignorance* or *ambition?* Do you think that they are not as well acquainted with human nature and human government as yourſelf? Muſt every man be a fool or a knave, ignorant

of mankind, or deſirous of rendering government impracticable in the hands of others, that it may fall into his own, who cannot ſubſcribe to the political creed of the author of Diſquiſitions on ſeveral Subjects?

But you ſeem to me to entertain a bad opinion of human kind; this appears in many parts of your Diſquiſition, but in none more remarkably than where you ſay you are perſuaded, that if an angel were ſent from heaven, veſted with irreſiſtible power to govern any country upon earth, and was to execute his commiſſion with the utmoſt degree of wiſdom, juſtice, and benevolence, his dominions would very ſoon be deſerted by moſt of the inhabitants; who would rather chooſe to

ſuffer

ſuffer mutual injuries and oppreſſions, however grievous, under any government in which they themſelves had a ſhare, than to be compelled to be virtuous and happy by any ſuperior authority whatever." What, if I ſhould ſimply ſay, that compulſion and happineſs could not exiſt together, there would be an end of your fine period; and yet it is true, you may as ſoon compel a man not to feel compulſion, as to be happy when he is compelled to be ſo. But the whole obſervation is without foundation; I conceive, that in the government you deſcribe there would not be a ſingle murmur, there would be no compelling men to be virtuous, they would be virtuous out of choice; their

their virtue would conſiſt in a perfect obedience to this angel, and they could have no temptation to be diſobedient. The angel, on your ſuppoſition, would have the utmoſt wiſdom to provide for the happineſs of each individual, the utmoſt benevolence to induce him to make this proviſion, and irreſiſtible power to effect his purpoſe. Shew me in all the world a prince with the perfections of this angel, and I will ſhew you a people happy, content, grateful, and obedient, even to a degree beyond the paſſive conceptions of the moſt determined Tory.

I have not wilfully miſrepreſented any thing you have ſaid, or deſignedly treated you with diſreſ-

pect;

pect; I have, therefore, no apologies to make to you on that ſcore; but I ought to beg your pardon for my preſumption on another. — I have indulged a fond hope, that by printing this *Brochure* in the manner I have done, it may have ſome chance of arreſting the curioſity of poſterity, by its exiſtence being continued to it under the covering and protection of your book; that the feeble antidote it contains may reſtore the conſtitution of ſome Whig ſuccumbing under the virulence of your poiſon, when this mortal coil ſhall be no more, and the authors of the poiſon and its antidote ſhall ſleep in peace.

London, March 16, 1784.

NEW PUBLICATIONS,

Printed for J. DEBRETT, (Succeſſor to Mr. Almon) oppoſite Burlington-Houſe, Piccadilly.

---

1. THE PRESENT HOUR. Prce 1s.
Sit mihi fas audita loqui. VIRGIL.

2. An AUTHENTIC LIST of both Majority and Minority, on the Motion of Sir John Rous, Bart. on Friday, March 15, 1782, for the Removal of the late Miniſtry. Price 2d.

3. An AUTHENTIC LIST of both Majority and Minority, on the Motion of the Right Honourable General Conway, againſt the American War. Price 3d.

4. An AUTHENTIC LIST of both Minority and Majority, on the Motion of Sir James Lowther, Bart. Dec. 12, 1781, Price 2d.

5. CONSIDERATIONS on the Attorney General's Propoſition for a Bill for the Eſtabliſhment of Peace with America: By an old Member of Parliament. Price 1s. 6d.

NEW PUBLICATIONS,

6. The SPEECH of the Rt. Honourable Charles James Fox, at a general Meeting of the Electors of Weſtminſter; (illuſtrated with a correct Likeneſs of the Hon. Mr. Fox) Price 3d. or 1l. 1s. per Hundred.

7. A SEAMAN's REMARKS on the Britiſh Ships of the Line, from the 1ſt of January, 1756, to the 1ſt of January, 1782.—With ſome occaſional Obſervations on the Fletts of the Houſe of Bourbon. Price 6d.

8. The STATE of INDIA, in two Letters from Warren Haſtings, Eſq. and one from the Nabob Aſuful Dowla. To which is added, a Series of explanatory Facts and Remarks. Price 1s. 6d.

9 EXTRACT of an original Letter from Calcutta, relative to the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, by Elijah Impey. Price 1s. 6d.

10. ORIGINAL MINUTES on the Appointment of Sir Elijah Impey to be Judge of the Sudder Dewanny Adawlett. Price 1s.

11. THE PARIAMENTARY REGISTER, (Numb. VI.) containing the whole of the intereſting Papers relative to naval Enquiry, now lying on the Table of the Houſe of Commons. Price 1s.

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1388
Return this material to the library
from which it was borrowed.

REC'D LD-URL
QL APR 15 1991
JAN 0 8 1991

DATE DUE

JUL 0 7 2004

SRLF
2 WEEK LOAN

THE·UNIVERSITY·OF·CALIFORNIA·LOS·ANGELES·THE·LIBRARY·OF
UCLA

THE·UNIVERSITY·OF·CALIFORNIA·LOS·ANGELES·THE·LIBRARY·OF
UCLA
THE·LIBRARY·OF·THE·UNIVERSITY·OF·CALIFORNIA·LOS·ANGELES
UCLA
THE·LIBRARY·OF·THE·UNIVERSITY·OF·CALIFO
UCLA
THE·LIBRARY·OF·THE·UNIVERSITY·OF·CALIFORNIA·LOS·ANGELES
UCLA
THE·LIBRARY·OF·THE·UNIVERSITY·OF·CALIFORNIA·LOS·ANGELES
UCLA

ıia Uni